pss*

What Ought To Be Done

A collection of real stories celebrating 100 years of PSS

Our story

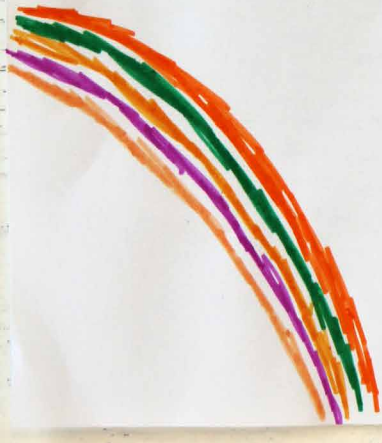
To the Alians or Robots

I hope in a 100 years
that eveyone is equal
there is NO Poor and Rich
No DRUGS
No Queens or Kings

Because in 2019

Life was hard

I hope life is over the Rain Bow
And Everyone is Happy



Founded by the wonderful Eleanor Rathbone and Dorothy Keeling back in 1919, PSS has always been a firecracker, beginning its life with the title 'Liverpool Personal Services Society'. Our motto was: 'a society for any citizen in difficulty' – and that is exactly what we were, and what we are today. For the last 100 years, we've been providing services that change people's lives for the better.

From our Liverpool home, we've been responsible for starting a whole host of social movements, believing in and passionate about making sure all people matter, moving and shaking the first services of their kind across many different disciplines of social care (we kicked off a ton of recognisable names – from Age UK, Legal Aid and the Citizens Advice Bureau to Relate and Riverside Housing). We wanted to fill the gaps we saw in the support out there, and where we saw a need for change, we approached gently, listened closely, imagined the possibilities and came back with a service that fit the bill. Thing is, even when we didn't come up with the idea ourselves, those around us knew they could trust us to do what's right.

Eleanor Rathbone said 'what ought to be done, can be done' and when everyone else was turning a blind eye or unsure of how to help people in their time of need, we said 'we hear you, let's see what we can do'. We've always been unapologetically different, a rebel with a gritty and heartfelt cause – and although our organisation has grown and developed in so many ways since 1919, that's never changed, and it never will.

PSS has evolved into a social enterprise, a national business with a great big heart. We're not just in Liverpool anymore, although we love our Scouse roots and that's where our head office, Eleanor Rathbone House, is based. We've got offices up and down the UK and in the Isle of Man – and we're growing all the time.

We provide over 20 different services to support people in whatever way they need us to, to help them live their lives to the fullest. We have social care services and mental health services, through to services to support women

who have offended in the past, and services to support families going through difficult times.

Our job's about listening to and learning from the people we support, giving them the chance to shape the services we provide and in turn, shape their own lives. We treat people as they want to be treated, and we really care about making sure the people we support have a choice and a voice. We're here with a helping hand when people need it most, without taking away their independence.

We celebrate all the wonderful differences between the people who work for us, but there are five things all PSS people have in common, our values. They were discovered by our own employees, picked out to reflect some of the personal traits PSS people have. Our values are the key to what makes our culture so unique; they're a reflection of who each of us are and they're embedded in everything we do. Sometimes other organisations approach us and ask how we managed to make our culture so strong. Our answer is really simple. We employ genuine, determined, professional, open-minded and big-hearted people.


PSS


Oliver!

REPORT 1951/52.

BOOTLE

PERSONAL SERVICE SOCIETY
and
CITIZENS' ADVICE BUREAU

Branch of the
Liverpool Personal Service Society (Incorporated)

5 ST. EDMUND'S RD.,
BOOTLE :: LIVERPOOL, 20

Telephone : BOOTLE 1114

Hours:

Mondays to Fridays, 9-30—12 noon and 2—4 p.m.
Saturdays, 9-30—12 noon.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE.

Chairman: Councillor A. O. HUGHES.

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District Head : Miss J. Kirkpatrick

Head Office at:

LIVERPOOL PERSONAL SERVICE SOCIETY,
34 STANELY STREET, LIVERPOOL, 1.

General Secretary : Miss F. E. Peck, M.B.E.

Introduction: *how it all began*

Back in 1919, Britain, and Liverpool in particular, was in the grips of post-war devastation. Thousands of young men had lost their lives fighting for their country and people all over were left living in widespread poverty: their lives, homes and families all torn apart by war.

Liverpool had been right in the thick of the wartime efforts, thanks to our global port and prime location as an operations base. But playing such a central role also meant that people in our lovely city were some of the worst hit in the country. While rates of poverty in other areas were starting to get lower, in Liverpool, the economic downturn that followed the end of the war meant Liverpool had two very different sides to it. On the one hand, we had gorgeous, sprawling houses and wealthy families living comfortably. On the other, we had large numbers of people living in slums, and lots of schools were made derelict.

At a time when women's rights were still pretty thin on the ground and opportunities for women were mainly limited to domestic service jobs, many women depended on their husbands, who had gone to war as sailors and soldiers. Lots of these men lost their lives, leaving their wives in desperate need of support; they'd become single parents overnight, trying to support themselves and take care of their children with very little help.

In the midst of all this chaos, there was no guaranteed safety net for people in need – no Welfare State to fall back on. No NHS. No guarantees. This is where brilliant philanthropic families, like the Holts, the Mellys, the Booths, and, central to our story, the Rathbones, really became the saviours of so many.

The Rathbone family were ship owners and merchants in Liverpool who had a really strong moral and social conscience. They began a family tradition of giving to those in need, and devoted an awful lot to public and social service - whether that was pushing for district nursing, campaigning for working standards for women and the payment of separation allowances, running as mayor of Liverpool or fighting as soldiers.

In 1918, Eleanor Rathbone could see first-hand that the city was in dire need of an organisation that looked after family-based social work. There was a gap, and she wanted to fill it. She had the idea to create 'a society at the service of any citizen in need'; a way for her to help as many people, as many families, as she could.

But she wasn't on her own.

Throughout our centenary year, we've discovered some fascinating new insights into how our organisation came to be – and how it came to survive as long as it has. It was thanks to one of our previous chief executives, Wally Harbet, who headed up PSS from 1964 – 1971, that we discovered how, without a man called Frederick D'Aeth, who Wally described as 'the man in the shadows', PSS may never have existed.

In 1905, after becoming a junior lecturer in social work at the University of Liverpool, Frederick D'Aeth began his own contribution to advancing the social care landscape. Living in Liverpool gave him a unique opportunity to be truly on the front line, find out where the need was and understand how he could move forward in his pursuit for social equality. The city desperately needed facilities for education and, with the help of William Rathbone (Eleanor Rathbone's dad), Frederick made arrangements for the development of further education for the working classes. He had a vision of what else could be achieved with the right support, and when he first heard the idea for a 'personal services project', he knew there was one woman perfect to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with Eleanor to set it up – a woman called Dorothy Keeling. Frederick managed to persuade Dorothy to get involved, and we've since learned that it was her agreement to move to Liverpool and be our general secretary that actually got the organisation off the ground. Dorothy brought many strengths to the table – one of them being, as J. R. Hobhouse, one of our previous Chairmen described

it, 'the ability to analyse a problem and find a solution', and as so many of the various stories we've heard over the years have told us, she was a force to be reckoned with.

In a move that was almost unheard of in what was still very much a man's world, Dorothy and Eleanor joined forces to lead this new project forward. And on 1 January 1919, PSS, or 'Liverpool Personal Services Society', as we were known then, was born (we changed our name to PSS when the meaning of 'personal services' began to mean something pretty different to what it did back then!).

From the start, PSS encapsulated the spirits of these two women perfectly - they formed a carefully-considered, well-timed, warm and welcoming society that didn't take no for an answer. Our early days have instilled in us an ethos that has lasted a whole 100 years: to see a need and find a way to help.

We started with just £100 per year from the Council of Voluntary Aid, and, since the Liverpool Central Relief Society already existed, little faith from those around us about what we could achieve.

Our ambition was greater and more all-encompassing than that of other societies at the time. We wanted to help as many people in need as possible. To show people that they have rights. To give vulnerable people a voice. To help people get a higher standard of life. We wanted to provide people with friendship and advice, rather than benevolence and charity. To treat people as equals.

Well… we sure showed them!

A lot of what we did to start with was experimental, and had never been done in Liverpool before. We set up a whole host of committees, funds and off-shoot societies to help people in need, spotting gaps in the support people could get, and filling them in the best way we could. We had a committee for old people's welfare, a dental advisory clinic, a 'Tired Mothers' Holiday Scheme' to give mums a break, a workshop, club and home-schooling for adults with disabilities, a housing advisory bureau and a scheme to introduce social workers into hospitals – to name but a few of our early initiatives. The variety and the breadth of these services only goes to show how in-touch we were with people, and how we listened.

The vast majority of our work was done by volunteers back then – incredibly talented people who came forward to help others in need; that typical warm, kind and helpful nature of Liverpool people clearly shining through in so many of the things we've seen and heard while doing our research. It's thanks to them - their selflessness and ability to treat others with dignity - that we owe our success. We'd be nowhere without them. They built foundations for PSS that have lasted 100 years - and we're proud to still have a base of brilliant volunteers today.

We based our early services on the idea that still makes a lot of sense today: even though the country's financial situation and concepts of welfare are constantly changing, the general principle of human need will always remain. It was this that made us different – and made us stand out amongst the crowd.

As time went by, our work (and our workforce) gathered momentum, and the ideas just kept on coming. Some of the totally unique services we started off from our Liverpool home grew into other, independent organisations and some became national initiatives that are still around today. Our timeline shows just some of our biggest and most innovative services.

HERITAGE FUND

Supported by the National Lottery through the Heritage Lottery Fund

100 years in the making: *our timeline*

1918

World War One ends at the same time as women are allowed to vote for the first time in the UK.

1919

With much hope and ambition for a better future... PSS was born. PSS, as we know it now, once called the 'Liverpool Personal Services Society' started life in Liverpool. Central to this was the pioneering work of social activist and campaigner for women's suffrage, Eleanor Rathbone.

Nancy Astor becomes the first female MP to take her seat in the House of Commons. Constance Markievicz became the first female MP the year prior, but as a member of Sinn Fein, never took her seat.

1920

We were a mover and shaker in the creation of Legal Aid. Not bad for our first crack at making a difference!

We helped the 'Poor Man's Lawyer Society' to get off the ground in Liverpool. Later on this developed into a service we all now know as Legal Aid.

1921

We were the first organisation to partner with a university to provide formal placements for social work students.

At the start this was with the University of Liverpool, but other organisations followed our lead, and lots of these partnerships still exist today.

The Anglo-Irish war ends and a treaty is signed to keep Northern Ireland as part of the UK, whilst the Republic of Ireland detaches to form its own government.

1927

We started the first Old People's Welfare Committee in the country.

It laid the foundations for the national system which was developed in 1940 – and later became Age Concern, now part of Age UK.

1928

We and some of our friends formed Liverpool Improved Houses, which is now independent and known as Riverside.

We wanted to make sure everyone had the homes they were entitled to under the 1925 Housing Act, so Dorothy Keeling, our first secretary, said we should set up a housing society. Liverpool Improved Houses bought and renovated older houses to make them shiny and new, ready to be homes again.

1929

Following a world stock market crash, the country was plunged into a deep economic crisis and unemployment rates were huge.

Eleanor Rathbone enters parliament as an independent MP for the Combined English Universities. One of her first speeches was about what is now known as female genital mutilation in Kenya. One of her most famous campaigns was for cheap milk and better benefits for children of the unemployed.

1936

We were one of the first organisations to help people whose marriages were going through a difficult patch. Our Unhappy Domestic Relationships and Marriages service formed the basis of Merseyside Marriage Guidance Council, which was rebranded as a local branch of 'Relate' in 1988.

1938

We opened 18 of the first ever branches of the Citizens Advice Bureau around Merseyside.

During the Second World War, people's homes were being destroyed, children were being evacuated and lots of people were in real need of advice and information about what to do next. The government hatched a plan to help and working with other voluntary organisations, we helped make it happen.

1943

Our Old People's Welfare Committee was one of the first to introduce home-helps into the lives of older people across Liverpool. Today, it's more commonly known as domiciliary care. We did this with our friends at the Queen Victoria District Nursing Association.

1945

World War Two ends.

1946

Eleanor Rathbone dies aged 73.

1948

The NHS is started.

1953

We started our Family Rehabilitation scheme - the first in the county to help families experiencing difficulty stay together and work through their problems. This paved the way for the UK's modern-day 'troubled families' agenda. Even way back in the 50s, we knew that when issues arise in families, or when there are intergenerational problems that are set to continue, the best thing to do is to work on it together. That was quite a new train of thought back then, and there wasn't any help around that focused on keeping families together.

1961

We set up Merseyside Far Eastern Ex-Prisoners of War Association, which helped those affected by experiences of war and imprisonment in Burma and India.

At a time when there was a big stigma around mental health and many mental illnesses were still unrecognised, there were no services around to support people with post-traumatic stress disorder. We wanted to change that and bring people who'd been through similar things together, so they didn't feel so alone.

1966

We were one of the first to take on a young person's advisor. Our first young person's advisor provided counselling and mentoring to young people in Merseyside. Once we realised just how much this service was helping, we took on even more of them and made the lives of lots of young people better. Later on, we let this service go so it could flourish into its own charity.

1967

Liverpool's Metropolitan Cathedral (or Paddy's Wigwam, as it's affectionately known) is built.

1971

We were one of the first to provide nurses with post-graduate training in children's mental health.

Acknowledging that there's more to our health and wellbeing than just physical health alone, we teamed up with United Liverpool Hospitals to provide nurses with training.

1973

The UK joins the European Economic Community.

1976

We opened the doors to our Family Clubhouse in Kirkdale, a forerunner to the modern day children's centre.

We started the Family Clubhouse on Newby Street in partnership with Liverpool Improved Houses, as part of Urban Aid and EEC Anti-Poverty programmes. The Clubhouse was a bit like a children's centre, but not like the ones we know today. Families would take part in activities, daytrips and holidays.

1978

We started Shared Lives in Liverpool – the first in the country.

When the government started closing down old 'institutions' for mental health patients, lots of older people had nowhere to go. Originally called (wait for it) 'Adopt a Granny', Shared Lives meant that instead of getting passed to another residential care home, these people could go and be supported in a homely environment by a carer and their family.

1981

The 'Toxteth Riots' took place in Liverpool following long-standing disputes between the police and the local black community.

1984

We launched our Care in Community scheme to support people with mental health difficulties in their communities, inspiring and influencing this way of working in other areas of the country.

Our scheme went against the general idea of the time that people with mental health difficulties should be institutionalised. Instead, we got out and about to support people in their own communities.

1989

The Hillsborough disaster shook Liverpool, as 96 Liverpool FC fans tragically lost their lives whilst attending an FA cup semi-final match in Sheffield.

1990

We started the country's very first Young Carers service.

We supported young people providing care to a member of their family. Our support workers helped young carers through challenging and emotional times in their lives, gave them space and time to unwind and feel like children, and gave them a sense of community with other young carers.

1997

We developed a service to promote the voice of the child in custody decisions. Our service was known as the 'Merseyside Family Mediation Service' and was created to provide advice and support around custody decisions. The big focus of this service was to make sure that the views of the child caught up in the situation were heard and reflected.

The Welsh Assembly is created.

2002

We launched one of the earliest Siblings Projects, which provided specialist help for the brothers and sisters of disabled children.

Over the years of working with people, we learned how hard it can sometimes be for brothers and sisters of disabled children - and we wanted to help. That's when we became one of the first to create a specialist project designed to support them.

2003

We established the UK's first specialist training for interpreters, supporting them to help with counselling asylum seekers and refugees.

PSS people working in our Spinning World service know just how traumatic some of the experiences of asylum seekers can be. As many asylum seekers don't speak English fluently when they come to the UK, communication can become a barrier to helping them express themselves and cope with trauma.

2008

We started TRIO, the first ever multi-person dementia service, where people are supported in the community alongside at least one other person with the same illness.

Our TRIO service is one-of-a-kind. In fact, it's the first of its kind in the UK. Instead of supporting people with memory loss on a one-to-one basis, we decided to try teaming a support worker up with two people who live with the condition, with the aim of providing them with some companionship, and a bit of support from someone else who knows exactly what it's like.

The global economy is hit by the banking crisis, leading to large-scale public spending cuts across the UK.

Liverpool becomes European Capital of Culture for the year.

2010

We started our Family Impact – Prisoners' Families service, which was one of the first of its kind to support the children of people in prison.

Children of prisoners are often overlooked, hiding away and keeping the realities of their situation a secret. They often find themselves isolated and judged on their circumstances. Our service was designed to support these children with their situation – bringing them together on common ground; learning from and supporting each other.

2012

London hosts the Summer Olympics.

2014

We set up Ruby to support women who are in hospital as a result of domestic violence. The aim of our Ruby service is to discretely get the women the help and support they need to improve their situation before they are discharged.

2016

The UK votes to leave the EU.

2017

We launched our Left Behind training course for teachers, to help them support children with a parent in prison.

It's said that many children who have a parent or family member in prison are living a 'hidden sentence'. That's why the experts in our Family Impact service teamed up with Novus to develop 'Left Behind', the first training programme in the UK that helps teachers to understand how to support children with parents in prison.

2020 - PSS turns the big 100!

A whole centenary of providing support for people up and down the UK.

Time flies when you're having fun. We've achieved so much and we're incredibly proud of all we've done, but there's no time to kick back and put our feet up - we've got another 100 years of great work to do.

THE LIVERPOOL ECHO FRIDAY 20 DECEMBER 1991

THE BEATLES MAKE WAY FOR CHARITY

Caring service celebrates big move

ONE of Liverpool's oldest charities is getting ready to move into the new year, bigger and better than ever. The Personal Service Society is celebrating the move to new premises in city centre Seel Street.

By Janet Tansley

Director Robin Currie said: "This year has been a very busy one for the society, especially with the move.

"It was necessitated by our steady expansion in recent years and the increasingly evident inadequacy and unsuitability of the Stanley Street premises.

"Our new building — the former Beatle City — offers more space, disabled access and an improved working environment."

In the past year the society — which provides services for the young and old, handicapped and victims of crime among others — has helped 11,000 people from Merseyside.

Mr Currie said: "Our work has also expanded in areas like Maghull and South Sefton, St Helens, Newton-le-Willows and Wirral.

"We have more than 700 volunteers who regularly offer their help and our thanks go to them."

Foreword

from PSS chief executive, Lesley Dixon

This, our 100th birthday year, has been a bit of a magical mystery tour of PSS's achievements. Since we started doing research into our history, we've uncovered a whole host of tales we'd never heard before, put meat on the bones of some age-old anecdotes and shone the spotlight on many different people, slowly but surely bringing the story of our wonderful organisation to life.

One of my favourite stories from our history comes from October 1931, when 31.5% of people in Liverpool were unemployed: the highest rate in Britain. There was so much poverty, and much of the relief available was given through food vouchers to be exchanged in shops, or it was given out in kind, pushed through the streets of the city in wheelbarrows or prams, there for the taking for those who needed it. The dignity and respect of those receiving support was not readily considered – but there wasn't much choice.

During this time, perhaps one of the greatest needs people had was for clothes and shoes. At PSS, we could see that having clothes that were wearable, warm and fit-for-purpose was a big part of people's self-esteem; it helped them retain their dignity, despite the other struggles they had. We got to work, and set up the Liverpool and District Clothing Committee, the Men's and Women's Boot Club, the Children's Boot Club and the Blanket and Sheet Club, all of which donated second-hand clothes, blankets and boots to families who were struggling to afford them. We also set up make-do and mend groups, where women would come together and do their best to repair clothes and shoes that were worse for wear, giving them a new lease of life. Lots of these were children's clothes, inside which parents had sewn their children's names. Instead of just passing these

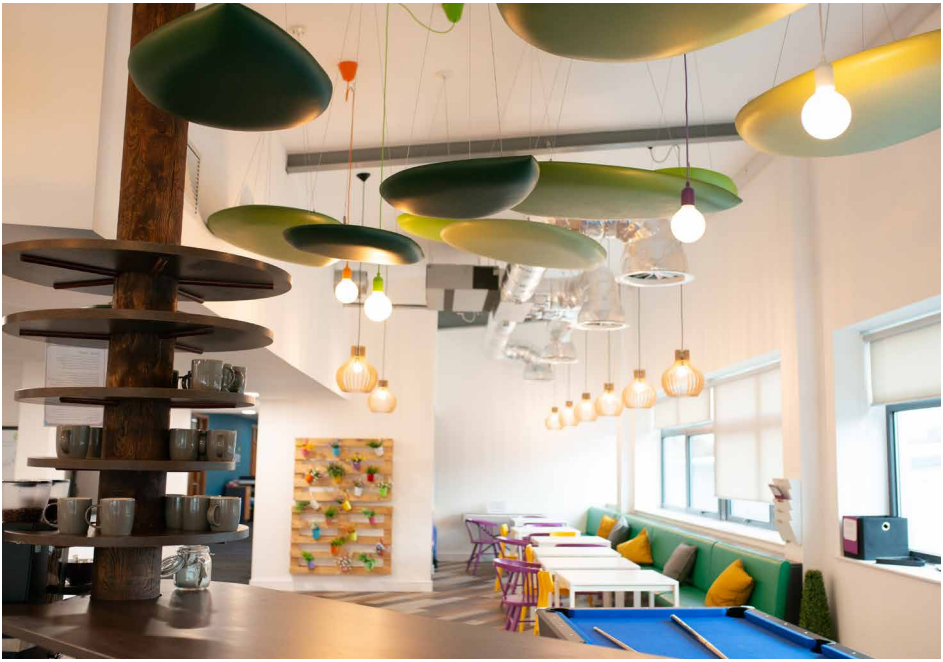
clothes on to the next family, we took it upon ourselves to cut out the previous owners' names – so that children could feel like they were just as deserving and that the clothes were always meant to be theirs after-all. In Dorothy Keeling's book, 'The Crowded Stairs', published in the 60s, which talks about PSS and its work until that point, Dorothy says that they heard a young girl who had received a donated dress say to her minister: 'Don't you think, sir, that having a pretty frock does help one to be good?'

Of course, the people running these clubs could've just passed on the clothes with the previous owners' names on the labels, and it still would've been a wonderful service – but acts like this come from the heart. And PSS people have always had heart in spades. In fact, big-heartedness is still one of our organisational values today; having empathy for others is an essential requirement of getting a job here.

We could've written a tome about the acts of kindness and dedication from our staff over the years, but we also wanted to give a voice to the people we have supported.

At the beginning of 2019, we put a call out for people – staff, volunteers, former team members and people we've supported – to come forward and share their experiences of PSS over the years, as part of our centenary celebrations. I'm really proud to now be able to say that this is it – the culmination of that work. It's my pleasure to introduce this collection of stories, speeches and insights, all of which paint such a clear picture of the places we've been, the things we've done and the people we've met along the way. They've made us laugh, they've made us cry and they've helped us see that despite being 100 years old, PSS is just as relevant now as its ever been. I'd like to thank each and every person who has bravely shared their stories with us. Without you, this book wouldn't have been possible.

Navigating 100 years' worth of stories is no mean feat! I'd also like to extend my thanks to historian Dr Michael Lambert, who during the preparations for our centenary year, has helped us piece the jigsaw that is our timeline together, and whose immense knowledge about the historical and sociological impact of our early work has been indispensable.



There's one story in this collection that has become particularly poignant in the time leading up to its publication. Eileen Johnson was our company secretary for 18 years and to many, the glue that held PSS together. She worked in many different roles during her career with us and became great friends with people from all over the organisation, known for her caring nature, wicked sense of humour and tenacity to get things moving. Even after she retired, Eileen continued to volunteer for PSS, helping to recruit Shared Lives carers. When we closed the doors to our Seel Street office in 2018 and moved to Derby Road, we held a closing event at Seel Street for our staff. Eileen was a big part of the original purchase of our Seel Street office back in the early 1990s, so we invited her back to be our guest speaker at that event. PSS people old and new gathered to hear her talk about some of her earliest memories of our time at Seel Street and how everyone thought it was this state-of-the-art space compared to our first office on Stanley Street. That careful investment by Eileen and the team is what has helped us to buy our brand new space, part of our plan to be around for future generations.

Sadly, Eileen passed away in November 2019. In the story entitled *Eileen*, she tells us how and why she came to work at PSS in her own words, and we're so happy that her story, told in her effervescent way, is now officially written into our history.

To people who work at PSS, their role is more than just a job. It's an opportunity to touch people's lives and make a real difference, as so many of the stories in this little collection demonstrate. And as talented and fabulous as our people are at carrying out the responsibilities in their roles, one thing that struck me is that it's not always all about the practical differences made to someone's life – sometimes the little things, those gestures that show people we care, are the things that make PSS people stand out. It's making people laugh when they feel they'll never smile again, it's a listening ear, it's fighting for someone when they have no energy left to fight for themselves, it's popping round to someone's house for a cup of tea when they're unable get to us, it's walking with someone through life despite the choices they've made, it's encouraging people to take that chance on themselves when their confidence is rock bottom, it's celebrating the things people have achieved and it's showing people their worth.

It's finding a way.

Our founder Eleanor Rathbone's family motto was 'what ought to be done, can be done' – and this collection of stories, named after this powerful phrase, shows us that at PSS, that sentiment was and always will be alive and well.

We couldn't be prouder of what PSS has achieved so far, and we're far from being finished. Here's to the next 100.


mum

Carers' plan is to go national

GUIDELINES drawn up on Merseyside to help young carers are set to be adopted nationally.

By Philippa Bellis

The guidelines were based on pioneering projects in Sefton, St Helens and Knowsley for children and teenagers looking after sick or disabled parents.

Recognised

Maire Gibson, co-ordinator for Priority Care with the North West Regional Health Authority, said: "The young people recog- ...d to ...issed out on sch... ...holidays and o... ...youth...

...what support they need.

The guidelines have been produced by the former Mersey Regional Health Authority, Liverpool Personal Services Society, Crossroads and the Carers' National Association.

Sir Donald Wilson, chairman of North West Regional Health Authority, said: "Many

UNIQUE SERVICE FO... PEOPLE WI... DISABILITI...

LIVERPOOL Personal Service Society is setting up ...Support Service ...have...

...thing that w... disabled clie... independent...

The servi...

THE SUNDAY TIMES 5 FEBRUARY 1989

Viewpoint

Foster-a-granny option

I HAVE been reading with interest the New Society articles on the elderly, all of which refer to older people as *either* remaining in their own homes, or, if they can no longer cope alone, as *having* to move into an institution. An additional option, however, is available in Liverpool and Sefton, in the form of an Elderly Care Scheme, organised by the Liverpool Personal Service Society, which explores changing social needs and pioneers new ways to meet them.

Nicknamed "the granny-fostering scheme" (despite an ever-growing number of granddads who benefit) it involves ordinary people, usually women, who become carers by opening ...doors of their homes and offering love and ca... "substitute daughters" and accept... ...recently bereaved woman o... Given one-to-o...

❑ OPEN! John Stoker and Gill Oliver at the opening of the new ce...

...itegory. No... ...tion f... ...running t... ...helping with jobs ...

HOME SWEET HOME FOR SAILO...

Happy . . . George

TWO years ago George Clinton was fed up with life in his old folk's home.

It was too big, too busy, too noisy and it was wearing him down.

Today he is lively, cheerful and dreaming of a trip to Rio — at the grand old age of 74!

George has found a new home-from-home in one of the ethnic community houses for the elderly run by Merseyside's biggest charity, the Liverpool Personal Service Society.

There are four houses in the city — two for Somalis, one for Chinese and one, where George lives in Wordsworth Street, Toxteth, for Afro-Caribbean pensioners.

SPECIAL REPORT BY LESLEY HUSSELL

Three or four men or women share each terraced house, and a home-help from the community calls in each day to shop, clean, cook the main meal and check they are well.

The set-up is ideal for old folk who would struggle to cope on their own, but do not need institutional care 24 hours a day.

George, an ex-seaman wh... sailed all over the world bu... suffers from arthritis, is th... on it.

"I've made up my mi... travel again, and I'm think... Rio," he grins. He is just w... for a pools win to finan... trip.

George lived in Kirkby ... years until his family bro... leaving him on his own. A... spell in the council-run ol... home, he is now happily se... the LPSS house.

"I've been here two year... like it very much. It's mor... real home.

Warrior meets young carers

'WARRIOR' of TV Gladiator fame, went along to meet youngsters and open a new service for the people of Wirral.

PSS, a social welfare organisation, has launched an innovative new service - the Wirral Young Carers Project. With the help of BT, who have contributed £10,000 towards the development of the service. The project was officially opened by 'Warrior' Mike Ahearn, of Birkenhead and he is seen with Ann McCracken, Bt Manager, Community Affairs and Young Carers.

A need for support of young carers was identified in Wirral and, following the success of PSS Sefton Young Carers Project, has been in Birkenhead.

support and understanding for youngsters.

'Young Carer' is a relatively new term used to describe a child or young person who provides support and assistance to a relative at home. This may be a parent, grandparent, brother or sister who is disabled, has a long term illness, or mental health needs. More details on 670 0960

Help for sufferers

A CENTRE in Aigburth Road caring for cancer sufferers was opened by John Stoker, regional director of the Government Office for Merseyside last week.

The Cancer Support Centre has been financed with the help of nearly £430,000 from the Government's Urban Programme.

Mr Stoker jointly opened the centre with Gill Oliver, director of patient services at Clatterbridge centre for Oncology.

Run by the Personal Services Society, the centre will offer a drop-in service providing emotional and other support to people suffering from isolation and depression.

ntre Code MAS

t to right: Miss Kate Charnock, Liverpool Health Authority, Mrs. Lillian
eson, President, Leeson Centre and Mr. Vic Citarella, Deputy Director,
erpool Social Services.

R GEORGE

The charity's success has prompted inquiries from charities and social workers throughout the country.

The secret is providing comfort and security in a familiar cultural setting. Some residents may speak no English, others may have forgotten in old age what they learned as youngsters.

LPSS, the local ethnic communities and Merseyside Improved Homes housing association work together to run the project and each house is kitted out to suit the needs and tastes of the residents.

Official opening of 'bigger' Leeson Centre in Speke

A centre serving the people of Speke has celebrated the official opening of its newly-enlarged premises in Alderwood Avenue.

The Leeson Centre named after the late Mr Bill Leeson, for many years a social worker in Speke—is managed

by its president, Mrs. Lillian Leeson, Bill Leeson's widow, supported by Liverpool's

firms and charitable trusts have generously supported

Nanmum

- 2018 -

Our Family Impact service does two very important jobs; providing support to children with a parent in prison, and being there for all members of the family when a parent is dealing with a substance misuse problem. As part of the service, we support grandparents who are taking care of their grandchildren in their parents' place, selflessly filling the role of, what Carol* likes to call, a 'Nanmum'; being there for them through some of the most difficult experiences of their lives. The support group we run for these wonderful people is a chance for them to get together and share their experiences, so they don't have to feel so alone. Here, Carol shares her story about how she became Nanmum to her grandson, Ben*.

'I tend to feel that my story is not typical. A lot of the grandparents have got really bad situations… ones with guns and drugs… the child's parents don't have any contact, that sort of thing. I'm different because my son, Ben's dad, actually lives with me.

Don't get me wrong, I do love him but I don't necessarily like him. As far as dads go, he's rubbish… but Ben worships him.

Originally, he and his partner lived in Inverness. They met there when he was carrying drugs up and down. It's really hard to tell what the truth is with her. The story at the beginning was that she had post-natal depression and that she'd given the children to her ex-husband because she couldn't cope. However, we've since discovered that it was actually social services that had come and taken them off her. Peter, my son, wasn't a user but she was already in a deep addiction. I mean, he'd always smoked weed but never anything more… until

she got him into heroin.

'Try a bit', she said.

...and then that's it. He eventually got onto methadone and then did a rehab programme and actually ended up getting off it, which is amazing, considering not many people do... so I'm proud of him for that. He's better now although he still uses other drugs 'recreationally'. I don't think we have the same definition of 'recreationally', but... you know.

I think what I've learnt as a parent is that the more you dig your heels in, the less likely they are to listen. We thought the relationship between them would pass, but it didn't.

Peter ended up in jail, surprisingly not even because of the drugs, but because he got into some fight. Whilst he was inside she went off with some other guy, but as soon as he was out she was back like a flash. That's when she fell pregnant. For a while they did pull their socks up - but I always just had this feeling that I was going to get this baby. I just couldn't see a scenario where they wouldn't take him off her.

Ben was 12 weeks premature. He was a dot of a thing! We went up to see him the minute he was born and then kept going back every couple of weeks. I remember watching as she was feeding him and he was so far away from her... I just wanted to take him and put him in the crook of her arm and cuddle him in.

Ben had a few problems when he was born because of how early he came. He was also born with cerebral atrophy. I'm assuming it was the drugs. The way it was explained to me was that it's almost like an electrical current that isn't quite working. If you're lucky, the brain finds a way to get the message across another way. We got told he'd never walk or talk and he's done both at a rate of knots!

For two years I couldn't really fault them but they were in Inverness so you don't know what you don't see. It was strange, if anything she was overly good sometimes. Ben was always washed and smelling beautiful. She'd have to-do lists everywhere! They also did a lot of stimulation with him and brought him everywhere they could, you know, so it did pay off in terms of his health.

I think she was always extra cautious at the beginning because she'd already suffered through a cot death but Peter has since told me that he did a lot of dragging her back from the brink, trying to keep her on track.

By the time they'd all moved down here, Ben was just coming up to three. At first they lived in the same street as us, which is when he started walking. We were there for all of that, which was great! They then moved to a couple more houses and it eventually turned out that he had a grow going on (he was growing weed) upstairs in every one. I mean, we could smell it but it was always blamed on a previous spliff.

Eventually, they split up. It turned quite nasty at times. They were both saying all kinds about each other and I just kept telling them to go their separate ways.

All of sudden, she wasn't really around. She said that Peter assaulted her and really turned the situation into something it wasn't. Finally, Peter got his own place and Ben went to live with him. He was really struggling though and couldn't get him to sleep or eat. One day, he called me up and said, 'Mum, can you take him for a couple of days and just get him into a routine?' Of course, I said yes.

It just so happened that Ben was with us when the police knocked on Peter's door. They'd found his grow of weed. He then came to live with us and got all the stuff confiscated, as well as a looming court date. Social services came round and had a look at our house and just said,

'Yeah, it's fine. Ben's fine!'

I didn't get any help from them, at all. Usually people have the opposite problem, you know, they won't leave them alone. They just thought that we were a middle-of-the-road couple and Ben would be fine. As long as Peter was living with us and Ben's there, there was no real danger.

I remember when Ben's mum wanted to come and visit. I just blagged it and said social services had said that she needed to have supervised visits. She did for a little bit and then out of the blue disappeared for about 17 months. The police eventually found her and said she was completely fine but she didn't want to know. Ben definitely noticed. Even on his birthday, we went to McDonalds and she was on something, drooping all over the table.

It was shocking how unhelpful social services were. I mean, she's done the same thing again recently… just disappearing. That's why I wanted supervised visits but they said it wasn't needed and she wasn't a danger. I mean, she was a known drug addict! I went absolutely spare.

It's hard sometimes, it really is… I did this over quite a period of time, raising kids. I remarried and had more children, so when Peter and Ben moved in my youngest son was only 16 years old. He finds it quite annoying, I mean he sees Ben as a little brother, but he hates the fact that Peter is so enabled. That's his favourite word… 'enabled'. We enable him, apparently, but what can you do?

I became involved with PSS when the school gave me a leaflet about bereavement and loss. I wanted to help Ben deal with his mum constantly disappearing. He was bed wetting and crying every night… it was awful. It was a bit tricky because it wasn't bereavement he was going through, but it was loss. He needed some kind of resolution and PSS were a big help with that.

In terms of the grandparents' group, I was quite reluctant to join but I eventually thought I'd give it a go. It took a few meetings to get used to it and to get to know everyone. Honestly, listening to other people's stories is so eye-opening because there's never a story that's the same. It's never A+B=C. It's so much more than that.

Ben's even come to some of the kids' groups and really enjoys it. It's just nice to make friends and do something a bit different. It's a chance to be a kid… carefree, no worries, with your mates.

That's how it should be.'

**Names in this story have been changed to protect identities.*


LIVERPOOL PERSONAL SERVICE SO
THE BASEMENT

Eileen

- 1980s -

You'd struggle to talk to a member of PSS staff, old or new, who didn't know Eileen Johnson. Eileen was a pioneer in the third sector, founding her own charity in 1975 before moving on to her role as company secretary at PSS. She spent 18 years with the organisation doing anything and everything that was required. She told us all about the PSS she recalls.

'I'll never forget the day I was interviewed for my job at PSS. I was sat in the corridor waiting to go in and I noticed there was a woman that kept looking over and smiling at me from in the corner. Eventually she glided past and quietly said, 'I hope you get it…we need a woman.' At the time I joined, it was a mostly male leadership team, which is strange when you think about how it was founded by two women. Maybe I started a bit of a new trend – since PSS has an all-female leadership team now! It's amazing to see PSS come full circle the way it has. The journey this organisation has been on is extraordinary.

One of my very first roles was company secretary, but before I even got the position, I had to be voted in. After my interview, the chairman stood up and suggested me for the job, asking if there was anyone in the room that didn't agree. All of sudden this lady, who I distinctly remember was wearing a remarkably big hat, put her hand up! Can you imagine? All of a sudden her face broke into a huge beam and she said, 'I'm only joking'. My goodness! My heart stopped!

Speaking of women, one service in particular that comes to mind is the Arbour Project. This was a service that focused on younger people and was there to

help give support to young, school-aged girls who had fallen pregnant. They would link up a volunteer with a young mum to show them how to do things like the weekly shop and cook a simple evening meal. They were incredible and when I first joined PSS we had the biggest number of volunteers in the whole of Merseyside. Now, that was something to be proud of!

Volunteers were absolutely the heart of the organisation. They were used for a service called Group Homes that housed three or four older people that had previously been put into institutions for those experiencing poor mental health and, to put it bluntly, simply left to rot. One particular man had lived in an institution called Rainhill for many years and came to us when he was 50. I couldn't help but think about all of those years he'd lost. When he was with us he was finally given a chance to have a real life. He even wrote a book. It was very moving to watch these people adjust to this new way of living. I once got told about someone who kept asking what jobs needed doing, because that was all he'd ever known.

They were incredible and when I first joined PSS we had the biggest number of volunteers in the whole of Merseyside. Now, that was something to be proud of!

What I always loved about PSS was despite the seriousness of the job, we could all still have a chuckle. Oh, we did have fun! Everyone was always so open and fiercely dedicated. Many times you wouldn't even be able to tell the difference between who worked there and who used the services. Isn't that lovely? There has never been a divide and everyone continues to support each other. The message that PSS always used to give was that we looked after people from the cradle to the grave.

You don't fully realise what PSS is until you are directly involved, or you need their support. I feel so lucky that I got to watch all these journeys and to see where people are now is mind blowing. It changes lives and it certainly changed mine.'


JSB
cipd
Eileen Johnson
Pass
JSB CPD
Advanced Certificate in Employment Law

Freedom

- 1961 -

When Far-Eastern prisoners of war returned to the UK from Burma and India, they'd seen and experienced some horrific things, which haunted them daily in the most awful ways. The feelings these men were having were never diagnosed; post-traumatic stress was still yet to be identified as a mental illness, and there was no support around back then to help them through it. There was still a big stigma surrounding mental health, and for a lot of men returning from war, talking about any mental health challenges they may have been experiencing felt taboo. This led them to feel lonely and isolated, unsure of what to do next and with nobody to really understand what they were going through. In 1961, PSS stepped in to do what was right. We set up Merseyside Ex-Prisoners of War Association - otherwise known as The Freedom Programme - to bring these men together, help them find comfort in each other's similar experiences and begin to reclaim their lives, bit by bit. PSS may not have been able to diagnose post-traumatic stress, but the specialist team were able to identify what they were feeling and, at a time when most would turn a blind eye, support them to cope with what they were experiencing. Not only was the service there to support them with the atrocious experiences they'd had at war, but also with the everyday stresses and strains that, once taken in their stride, had now been amplified by trauma – things like finding work or dealing with debts. This was a ground-breaking service that began laying the foundations for a revolution in mental health support.

Jeremy looked like any other 34-year-old man trying to navigate the poverty lines of Liverpool, the burdens of his past weighing him down with each new day. He'd been held as a prisoner of war in the Far East for several years and due to the mistreatment and neglect he received, was taken to hospital when he returned to England. His treatment lasted for several months and as well as his external injuries, his mental health started to rapidly deteriorate. He just couldn't seem to get the things he'd seen and felt in the Far East out of his mind. Feeling helpless, he realised he could never return to the job he'd previously held. He would no longer be able to handle the pressures of manual labour and would have to enter a new profession that involved something at a much slower pace.

Worries about the future consumed him as he realised he could never return to the job he'd previously held.

Jeremy lived with his wife and family just outside of Liverpool as he'd been unable to find a cheap enough place to stay in the city. However, by a stroke of luck, in 1967 he was offered a job with security in Liverpool and was given the chance to buy a house. He knew he could never raise the deposit that was needed in such a short space of time. PSS's Far Eastern Prisoners of War Association heard about Jeremy's struggle and teamed up with other organisations to raise the necessary funds for him to lay some foundations and get that home he needed in the city. They eventually raised enough deposit money for Jeremy and his family to buy a house, and supported him through the process. Jeremy felt an enormous sense of relief. The last few months may have been hard, but it was all worth it now that they were back where they belonged. Thanks to the Freedom Programme, slowly but surely Jeremy and his family began to rebuild their lives, and PSS was able to provide lasting support whenever they needed it.

Sometimes these practical forms of support can really make a difference to the many dimensions of someone's life. Being given the opportunity for a fresh start without having to face the battle of getting there meant that Jeremy's life was turned around and he was better able to cope with his experiences.

Many men like Jeremy were so inspired by the support they received in this service by specialist therapists and volunteers alike that they went on to become trustees of subsequent organisations supporting many more men like them.

Joe, you'll never *walk alone*

- 2000s -

By listening to and learning from people about exactly how and when they want to be supported, at PSS we're able to provide support that is tailored to each person who uses our services. In our Supported Living service, we give people who have a learning disability or mental health needs just the right amount of support to help them live their lives to the fullest, with as much independence as possible. It's our job to support people to get what they want out of life, and to make sure their voice is heard.

This story, told by Kirsty, a support worker in our Supported Living service, is a prime example of our team being led by the people we support, sometimes against the odds. It's about the final wishes of Joe, a man she supported for many years, who never asked for much, but who impacted on many people's lives in the most wonderful way (not to mention those of the team here at PSS)...

'When Joe became ill, we spoke to him a lot about what he wanted to happen. We wanted to make sure we knew exactly what he wanted. He was sick for a few years and we could see him deteriorating, but he was fighting. Even right up until the last day, he was fighting.

We asked him if he'd like to move on to somewhere where he could maybe be better looked after, but he just wanted to stay. He wanted to die in the place where he had experienced happiness.

I remember being told that it was best that Joe got moved to a hospice, but we

When it came to Joe passing, we gathered everyone he loved to be around him. We rang all the members of staff that he wanted there, some didn't even work at PSS anymore but they still came.

all knew that wasn't what Joe wanted to do. We knew he wanted to die in his house, his own space where he felt comfortable.

We went to the doctors again to see what we could do to make sure this would happen – and sure enough, things started to move in the right direction. We made as many special arrangements to support his wishes as we possibly could.

Firstly, we knew that if Joe was going to stay at home, we wanted to learn more about how we could support him through his final weeks, so we got doctors in to teach us about palliative care. We managed to get him a hospital bed for his house, so he was more comfortable. He had no one else, so we were his family.

We had nurses come in daily to check on Joe and they would monitor him and check on his blood pressure.

When it came to Joe passing, we gathered everyone he loved to be around him. We rang all the members of staff that he wanted there, some didn't even work at PSS anymore but they still came.

We actually tried to spread his ashes at Anfield but this wasn't allowed! So we picked somewhere else that was close to his heart, the back garden of his home, the place he'd wanted to stay.

When Joe passed we washed him down and put him in the clothes that he wanted to be in. We made sure to the last detail that whatever he wanted, he got. For his funeral we played, 'You'll Never Walk Alone'. He wanted people to talk about him and afterwards everyone came back for a drink because Joe liked a pint! It was really important to celebrate his life because he was such a lovely, lovely man. We had to make sure that he got everything. Joe was a war baby and he'd tell the most amazing stories. He didn't ask for much during life but it was honour to make his final wishes come true.'

Happy end for Dien's story

Echo Woman Exclusive

THE five-years-old dream of a young Chinese-Vietnamese refugee now living in Liverpool, came true yesterday afternoon when he saw eight members of his family walk off the jet that had flown them to freedom.

At Manchester Airport he was reunited with the family he last saw in war-torn Saigon. His baby brother of three is now eight; his young sisters are now young ladies of 18 and 20. His three other brothers are now 11, 15 and 21. And his parents have probably grown older than that five-year gap would normally show.

Dien Quang Ngo is the young man's name. In 1978, at 19, he smuggled himself aboard a Taiwanese ship for Hong Kong. He was without food for one week before the ship entered Hong Kong waters on Christmas Eve. Here they waited for three weeks before berthing. Ten more months' wait in Hong Kong preceded Dien's arrival in Liverpool as one of 300 refugees to be welcomed and housed here during the past four years.

Dein's story is special on two counts. He is the first Liverpool resident to have his family fly direct from Hanoi in a joint government-Home Office agreement.

He is also probably one of the last young men whose fight to bring in his family to this country has paid off. Since 1980 the criteria for such reunions from Vietnam and China has been restricted to husbands, wives, children and dependents.

Dien speaks some English now, but is shy of being interviewed without an interpreter. In his first communication with the Press he spoke to me this week and told me of the five-year wait for his family.

"Firstly I would like to thank the Home Office and other authorities for allowing my family in. It is like a wonderful Christmas present.

"The last Christmas present I can remember people commenting on like this, was when we were still in Hong Kong waters in 1978. There were three-and-a-half thousand people on our boat. Nearly 20 people had died.

"I had no food because I had grasped the opportunity of getting on board when it happened. I was responsible for checking [illegible] no time to say goodbye to my family. I just didn't come home.

"I had no food with me, like the other passengers. I just hid in the lifeboat. We didn't know where the boat was going. But [illegible] blankets flown to us by helicopter. Everyone said that it was the Queen's Christmas present to us. But really, although it was chilly compared to Saigon, food would've been better. We did get bis[illegible]its later and oranges, but the old [illegible]ple suffered very badly.

When we arrived at the transit camp in Hong Kong I met my friend Hein Quang Huynh, who is a Vietnamese. He lives with me now in the multi-story block of flats here in Liverpool. The other nine members of his family all live in a two-bedroomed house in Ellesmere Port. Like me he has been to special classes to learn English. He is a good friend.

"It has been lonely without my own family. I have been able to contact them, though. In Hong Kong I sold my gold signet ring to send them a telegram telling them where I was. When I got to England I wrote and they were able to reply. The authorities were very cross when I didn't return to the family and for a time their rice ration was stopped.

"They have been hoping that they can join me and although they will have to now spend some time in a transit camp, they will wait patiently until we can be together.

"They know that they will have to learn English and that they will not be able to carry on their family business of making rock sugar."

Working for Dien's family to get the last of the 40 houses Liverpool has allocated for Vietnamese refugees, is Mrs. Jean Campbell, Volunatry Co-ordinator of the Vietnamese Support Group in the city.

"This whole story is a tribute to this young man's persistence and faith that his family would be able to join him. Now we are hoping that the Ngo family can be housed here as quickly as possible," she said.

"Liverpool has been marvellous in many ways housing these people over the years. But there is still, of course, a great deal of prejudice and even ignorance in some quarters about these peoples' problems.

"I have a hard time on occasions explaining that they are now immigrants in the usual sense of the word. They are refugees and as such are being welcomed on humanitarian grounds."

VIVIEN TOMLINSON

Dien Quang Ngo—"It has been lonely without my family."

LIVERPOOL EC WD 1/12/83

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LPSS care scheme lauded

A NATIONAL study has praised Liverpool Personal Service Society's boarding out scheme for elderly people. This project, which has been running for 4 years, provides short-term accommodation for elderly people in carers' homes, either to allow the relatives who normally look after the elderly person, to have a much-needed break or to

Continued on page 3

Castle Street bicular. Aug. 1983

Support plan for victims of crime

By Jack Ashton

IN the aftermath of a crime, the victim is often forgotten and left to pick up the pieces while attention is focussed on bringing the culprit to justice.

But help is now at hand, under a scheme called Aid for Victims of Crime, run by the Liverpool Personal Service Society.

There are eight victim-support schemes in Liverpool and Kirkby. The latest one, in Tuebrook, was added to the list last October.

The Personal Service Society has just produced a leaflet highlighting the service to people during the first 48 hours after a crime.

Victims are referred by police officers, social services, hospitals, the probation service, Age Concern and community organisations, and carefully trained volunteers are used to give practical and psychological help.

Rhoni Summerton, the society's victim services development worker, said burglary caused the most distress because personal and home security was threatened.

"People describe being burgled almost like being raped," she said. "It is the little personal things that people lose. The loss may be greater than the loss of a great sum of money.

"We don't try to be social workers, although we do liaise with them. The first help offered is a listening ear, and that is lacking in our communities to-day.

"We can't offer direct financial help, but we do liaise with agencies that can."

Armstrong on 0151 702 5555.

*Hope for Kim**

- 2018 -

Kim's story is one that crosses continents. When she first came to the UK from Kentucky to visit friends, little did she know how her life was about to change. The events that followed led her to our Ruby service, which supports women who have been affected by domestic abuse. This is her story.

'After going through a divorce, I came to England to visit my very good friends in Hull and spend some time here with my two sons. Whilst I was here someone I knew from Liverpool, Charlie*, got in touch and said it would be great to see each other whilst I was over. My priority was obviously my friends and I wasn't sure that I'd even have the time. Anyway, he ended up surprising me with a trip to Dublin! I mean, I guess it's a little weird to do that but I just kind thought it was like a Richard Gere/Julia Roberts... Pretty Woman kind of thing, you know? I'd never ever have the money to go to somewhere like that and he said, 'Listen I really want to do this and spend this time with you and your sons...'

We had an amazing weekend, just really magical. After we came back from the airport, he dropped me back off at my friends' and kind of just invited himself in for dinner. I thought it was strange... I mean, my friends were cool about it, they're really great people, but he ended up hijacking the entire trip.

I flew back to Kentucky, where I lived at the time, and Charlie got in touch again and said that he'd love to come over and visit. You know? Spend time with the boys. I mean, looking back there are some red flags. I can see the warning signs, but I'd just come out of a relationship where the person I was with didn't want to spend any time with me and then all of sudden this guy was giving me so much attention. I was flattered.

Charlie ended up coming over and again, we had a great time! He was really amazing with the boys and they were even starting to confide in him. Adam*, my eldest, had been abused by his dad at a young age and found it really difficult to open up to anyone, but especially men. The fact he was choosing to talk to Charlie about personal things was a really big step.

I was a school bus driver at the time and, despite the fact that school isn't in progress, during the summer I still got paid. I decided to take the boys over with me and stay in Liverpool. I could come over here for up to six months on a tourist visa and I'd still be getting a pay check… so it was a win-win situation.

About two weeks into the trip I found out I was pregnant. I was shocked and just didn't know what to do. Charlie wanted me to move here so we could be a family and I understood that. I didn't want the baby to grow up without a dad. We agreed that I'd start the process of obtaining a visa and together we'd give it a go.

All of a sudden it just turned. I don't know… it's like he couldn't pretend anymore and this controlling, paranoid nature just started to come out. He was unravelling, slowly, until he was completely undone.

When the kids would come up to me and whisper something, he'd pull me aside and ask what they'd said. He didn't want me to talk to them on my own without him knowing. My own kids. I told him that he had to earn that respect… kids are difficult to gain trust from, you know? If they don't know you, they're not just going to reveal their deepest darkest secrets. He didn't like that at all.

We'd have fights and he'd force me to get in the car and drive somewhere. He'd just lock me in so I couldn't get out. I was pregnant, and just so scared all the time. I was scared for the baby. For my sons. For myself. I felt trapped and manipulated.

There was one instance when Adam needed something for his e-cig. I gave him some money to go across the road and get whatever he needed. I think it was £10.00. Charlie came in later that night and asked if he'd given it back to me and I said, 'Yes, don't worry about that… it's all sorted.' He just flipped. He was screaming and barged into Adam's room, accusing him of stealing money from me and not giving me the right change. My youngest son came running in and said that Charlie wouldn't let Adam out of his room and if I didn't go in straight away someone would get killed. I managed to get the door open and

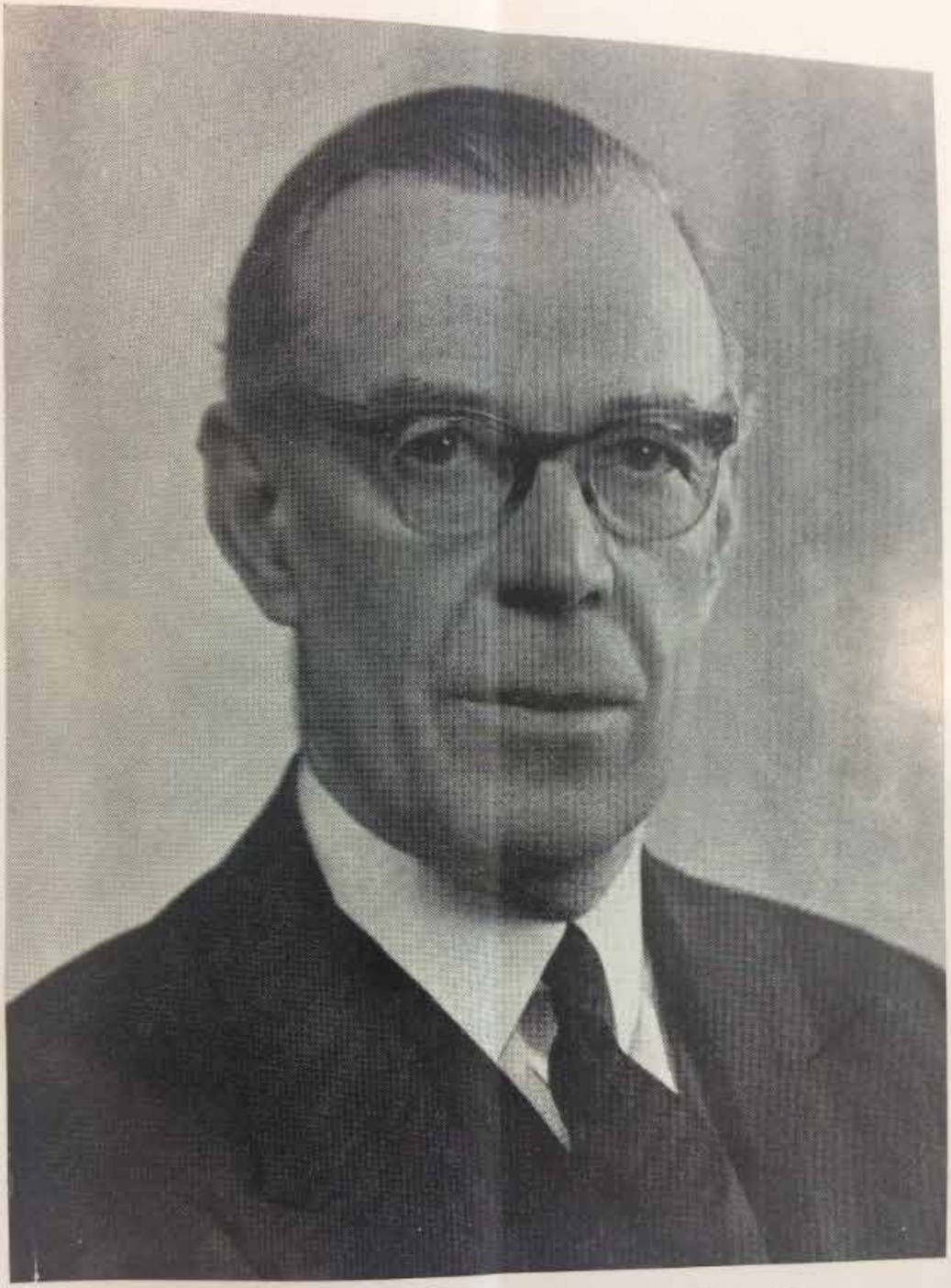
wedge myself between them, but it was difficult, you know? I was pregnant and I didn't want to hurt the baby. Adam was holding his hands up and telling Charlie to just leave it, but he was antagonising him. He was trying to get a rise out of him, and I knew the moment that there was skin on skin contact, Adam would just go crazy. The abuse had just made him that way… it's not his fault. He was being so patronising and started talking in a mocking baby voice. Luckily, Adam was able to get out and I just started screaming at the boys to pack up their stuff. I even called Charlie's mum and told her she had to come over here and help me, but by the time she got here, Charlie was in bed asleep. He'd caused all that upset and commotion and then just gone to bed.

In the next few months, I had the baby. I'd spoke to immigration and we were finally getting somewhere with our visas. I came in and told Charlie and he said it was great news. I went and got a shower and came out to find him on the phone. He'd called them and said that he'd no longer be the sponsor. He was just taking our rights away from us. I'd fought so hard to be able to provide a life for my sons and now it was ripped away from me.

The abuse continued and there was one night when the police ended up getting called. They wanted to know everything and interviewed us in separate rooms. I was always told to just keep my mouth shut but the boys revealed everything. They said I had to tell truth and couldn't risk me going back to somewhere that was so unsafe. I ended up having to ask the lady at the chip shop that made his salt and pepper chicken to let us sleep on her couch. Charlie had cut me off from everyone and I didn't have a soul to turn to.

I ended up finding Ruby at PSS. Those women are so much more than what they do. I know I can ask them anything and they'll be there. There are no set hours and I never ever feel alone. If I have no one to support me in court, they'll be with me. If I have any questions about paperwork, they're there to help. They've become friends and I couldn't be without them. They've saved me. They've got me back on my feet and helped me with money for the baby… but I just want to have the rights that I was promised. I want to be able to work and give my boys a life that they deserve. The women at PSS give me something that I hadn't had in a long time… hope.'

**Names in this story have been changed to protect identities.*



P. J. D. TOOSEY, C.B.E., D.S.O , T.D., D.L., J.P.

Hon. Treasurer.

Treasurer Toosey

and the bridges on the River Kwai

- 1945 -

In 1945, Lieutenant Colonel Phillip Toosey, a local man born and bred in Birkenhead, joined PSS and became honorary PSS Treasurer. He was an active and dedicated part of the PSS team who always took time to visit the people we supported, learning about them and from them, passionate about making sure we were supporting the people who needed it most. But Phillip Toosey also had an absolutely fascinating personal journey of his own – one that not many people knew about at the time. Not only was he a valued member of our organisation, a husband and a father, he was an incredibly accomplished military man and the hero of an amazing wartime story that was later to become the plot of an Oscar-winning movie: The Bridge On The Kwai. Treasurer Toosey had his own version of the story to tell – one which to him felt very different to what he saw portrayed on the silver screen.

On 31st August 1939, Phillip Toosey, who was at that time a Major in the Territorial Army (TA), was called by telegram to his regiment's headquarters in Liverpool. The day many of his men had thought would never come had arrived: war was about to break out, and they were to start getting ready for action. Four weeks later, Toosey's gunner regiment became the first to leave the country for France, where they would join the British Expeditionary Force and help the French defend their border against Germany. Neither Toosey or his regiment had any idea what to expect when they embarked on their first deployment together.

In 1941, after a period of action in Belgium and being evacuated at Dunkirk, Toosey had hugely impressed his senior officers with his leadership skills, and they wanted to reward him with more responsibility. The newly-promoted Lieutenant Colonel Toosey was sent to the Far East in command of the 135th Field Regiment, to defend Singapore from Japan. After a journey that took over three months at sea, Toosey and his men arrived at Singapore harbour on 13 January 1942 to blistering heat and news from the men who were already stationed in Jitra, up in the north, that they had just suffered a big defeat against the Japanese and had started retreating southwards.

The Japanese began working their way down the mainland towards Singapore Island, where Toosey and his men were stationed. The thing is, the Japanese soldiers were experienced in and really well prepared for fighting in the jungle environments, but the British soldiers weren't. Amongst all the leaves and trees, their radios were playing up, so they had to rely on phones to get messages to each other. Even though the Japanese soldiers were at an advantage, Toosey and his men never gave up.

His men were given orders to withdraw to Singapore Island, and on 13 February, a few days before their eventual surrender, Toosey was sent for by General Key, who told him he would be evacuated to India, along with some other people who were, like him, considered among the most valuable men to the British Army. But Toosey, true to his determined spirit, wouldn't go. There was no way he was going to leave his men to fight the final battle for Singapore Island without them – he was their leader, after all. Despite the General tying his best to persuade him, Toosey refused to leave. He went straight back into action and tried to help his men defend the island as best he could, even though their own guns were on another ship that hadn't yet arrived.

But on 15th February, in spite of the brave efforts of his and other men fighting against the Japanese, Toosey got word that they were to surrender. At that point, he, along with almost 90,000 other British troops, became prisoners of war. As Toosey's men gathered back together from their various posts, they were exhausted, deflated and worried about their fates.

Unable to escape, Toosey and his men were subject to horrendous living conditions in various camps – the first of which was supposed to house 8000

There was no way he was going to leave his men to fight the final battle for Singapore Island without them – he was their leader, after all.

men, but instead had 40,000 people in it. They were moved around various times to different temporary camps until they reached the more permanent Tamarkan camp, which was on the banks of Mae Khlong in Burma. There, they lived with another two regiments, who had already built some bamboo huts for the men held there to stay in. Quickly realising that the Japanese had intended to use the men as slaves, as the senior officer, Toosey took over command of the camp with the hope of making things better.

Soon after, Toosey had his suspicions confirmed when he received instruction from Lieutenant Kosakata, who was the Japanese commander of the camp, that his men were to be used for labour. And not just for small jobs. Far from it! The construction of a bridge over the river had been on the cards for some time, but because of the lack of labour to do it, it hadn't gone ahead. Toosey and his men got orders to build two bridges – first a big wooden bridge over the swelling Mae Klong river, to help the Japanese continue their wartime efforts, and a steel and concrete bridge further down. The plan was to demolish the wooden bridge as soon as the sturdier one was completed.

These orders didn't go down well with Toosey.

The men were set to work, but he couldn't just stand by and let all of this happen. Over the coming months, he stood up to the Japanese as best he could, receiving multiple beatings as he tried to protect his men from what everyone knew would be a torturous task. They were all hungry, in pain from the tough physical task and wilting in the blistering heat. He and his men did everything they possibly could to sabotage the plans – even incorrectly mixing concrete and collecting white ants to eat away at the wooden structures. But they were supervised by guards most of the time, and so although their intentions were to slow things down as much as possible, they still had to crack on with the job they'd forced to complete.

Always dressed as smartly as he could, he worked day and night with the men on the bridge, even when he wasn't needed, and insisted that all other officers did the same. For Toosey, there was to be no divide between the ranks – everyone was to work equally and together. Being around while the work was going on gave him the opportunity to step in when arguments happened between the men and the Japanese guards, usually due to the prisoners misunderstanding the Japanese guards' instructions.

Over time, Toosey used his negotiation skills to take more and more control over their working and camp life, assuring Kosakata that if he had more control over the situation, his men would perform better – and that he would hold his men accountable for any slip in behaviour. Phillip Toosey was a man of really strong values of honesty and integrity. He was passionate about developing and maintaining community spirit in camp, insisting that officers - despite their more senior positions - shared the same huts as the rest of the men and that food was given out in equal measure. He wasn't afraid to get his hands dirty and did his fair share of manual work at the camp; digging camp toilets, chopping wood and generally keeping the camp going. He negotiated days off for his men so that they had time to do things for their own wellbeing and he started up sports leagues in camp – football, basketball and volleyball – to lift the morale of his men as much as possible. He even helped arrange things like carol concerts around Christmas time.

Toosey continued to run a tight ship, and by the end of April 1943, despite everything that had been thrown at Toosey and his men and all the blood, sweat and tears that had been shed, the bridges that would form the basis of the Thailand – Burma railway were complete. During this time, Tamarkan got a bit of a reputation, becoming known as the best prison camp in Thailand. The death rate during the build was really low, too – only 9 out of the 2600 prisoners working on the bridge died. Men who were still fit and able were sent up the river to work on building the actual railway part.

But although the bridges may have been complete, Toosey's work wasn't. He stayed behind at Tamarkan, which after a cholera outbreak in other camps, became a hospital base camp. Under Toosey's command, sick men were cared for by doctors in the huts on site, often shipped in from other places and dumped in the jungle, dirty, weak and covered in flies, for Toosey's men to

Phillip Toosey's is an amazing story and an amazing man. How lucky we were that he gave his time and his expertise to us.

go and find. No special hospital huts were built – there was no time and no room – so doctors, already working without all the tools they'd usually have in a hospital - often found themselves climbing over people to examine others. Luckily, though, thanks to Toosey's great leadership, discipline and insistence on keeping the camp clean, tidy and in order, things were much easier and more hygienic at Tamarkan than any of the other hospital camps, and cholera didn't spread there. He made himself visible around camp and led by example. If men passed away, he attended every funeral.

Until the Japanese surrender in August 1945, Toosey remained a prisoner in the Far East; fighting for the rights and liberation of his men as best he could, playing a vital role in a story that is now famous world-wide. He returned to Liverpool on 10 November 1945, and among many voluntary roles with the likes of PSS, continued his career with the TA, receiving an OBE in 1946.

In 1961, PSS set up Merseyside Far Eastern Ex-Prisoners of War Association to respond to the needs of people who had been affected by experiences of war in Burma and India, and in 1966, Toosey became president of the National Federation of Far Eastern Ex-Prisoners of War, supporting veterans as he had throughout his whole career.

Phillip Toosey's is an amazing story and an amazing man. How lucky we were that he gave his time and his expertise to us.


pss*

Charity on *Brookside*

Liverpool social work charity PSS is featuring in Channel 4's *Brookside* over the next few months, exploring the realities of charity marketing. The series shows *Brookside* character Patricia Farnham, played by Gabrielle Glaister, working freelance on the PSS account, having become disillusioned with her advertising job. In real life PSS are acting as advisors to the script editors.

Robin Currie, director of PSS said he was glad to have the organisation featured in the series, but that there had been some initial reservations. 'Many of us are understandably wary of the way in which people are portrayed in the media. I am particularly pleased that *Brookside* has decided to base the story on a real life charity and explore the actual marketing dilemmas and problems we face.' One of development officer Sue Atkinson's worries was the impression created by the

Patricia Farnham: Brooks social conscience

Women's day

The Avenue, 32-34 Lee Park Avenue in Woolton is to hold Womens Drop-In classes on Fridays from 9.30am until 12.30pm.

Activities planned include vegetarian cookery, photography and confidence building, a free creche is available.

For more information telephone 0151 487 9111.

Such caring people

I HAVE lived away from Liverpool for 38 years and in many places.

In August, I had to return as my mom was very ill and eventually passed away.

From the moment I arrived, I was overwhelmed by the wonderful services and people who helped my mom and me.

Without them and the marvellous support, I don't kno how I would have managed.

There are so many people t thank, especially the superl nurses and sisters at Ward 9, Broadgreen Hospital. Their compassion and assistance was brilliant.

Jill and Nancy, two fantastic ladies from the Liverpool PSS, were absolute angels. Pauline from Cross Roads and your night nurse, Pat the home help, Mr Yesson the solicitor, the boys at Village Cabs, Jaqui Traynor the great warden at Boxdale Court and the residents, Joan at the Co-op, Garston, Sister Scott and many others.

I thank you all. Nowhere in the world will anybody ever find better, compassionate people than those from Liverpool.

Rosemary Taylor (Wyke), Perth, Australia

A lot of time for PSS

Japanese Professor Kazuko Enomoto has a lot of time for PSS, one of Liverpool's leading voluntary social service providers. She decided to make her feelings clear with the gift of a traditional wall-clock.

Professor Enomoto presents a traditional wall clock to PSS Director, Robin Currie

Professor Enomoto of the Ottemon Gakuin University in Osaka has worked closely with PSS over many years, focusing particularly on the charity's innovative developments in care for older people.

Her study used the Merseyside experience to provide a model to meet future needs for the growing number of elderly people in Japan.

She has also written a book on the innovative services for older people on Merseyside. Called Family Welfare Service of the Aged, it has now been published in English and is based on Professor Enomoto's research with users of PSS services, as well as carers and staff employed on the schemes.

Robin Currie, Director of PSS, said: 'We greatly value our links with Professor Enomoto and we are grateful for the international dimension she has given us, highlighting how problems confronting us as providers of services are not unique to Britain, or even to Europe, but are replicated in many parts of the world.'

Young and old in home share plan

HOME is where the heart is — under a pioneering community project in Liverpool.

The Home Share scheme aims to forge links between young and old by offering rent free accommodation in return for help around the house.

Organisers, Liverpool Personal Services Society, hope joint arrangements can be worked out between pensioners and students.

Jeff Cochrane, who is heading the project, said: "It is based on the simple exchange of free accommodation for a set amount of care."

For more details ring 051 707 0131.


LLANDUDNO

Stickers and *seagulls*

- 2010s -

Pauline has been working with PSS for over twenty years in our Supported Living service, which gives people an opportunity to live their lives their own way, with just the right amount of support for them.

Sometimes, as Pauline explains, that means going on some pretty eventful adventures. In fact, when you're supporting free-spirited people like Billy, everyday life is an adventure – and that's the way it should be.

'The great thing about Billy is his outlook on life – he's his own person. And he's always up to mischief – mischief is his middle name! Every day is an opportunity to get out there and experience something; he'll throw himself into whatever it is he wants to experience.

One story that springs to mind is when the two of us, Billy and three other men we support went on a little break to Llandudno together.

Ange and I stayed in the middle room, Billy was in his own room, and the two other men we went with shared a room. Billy was made up that he'd got a sea view and a balcony. It was lovely!

So anyway, we'd just got back to our room after seeing that everyone all okay, and we were having a cup of tea. All of a sudden we heard this banging. It was coming from Billy's room, which was the other side of ours.

Ange was drying the cups we'd just washed and she said, 'What's happening in Billy's room?'

We darted off to see what has happening. When we walked in. Well…we walked in to a room filled with what honestly must have been about eight seagulls.

They were flying around everywhere! There was poo covering every surface and, all the while, Billy was just feeding them anything he could find.

We just screamed at the sight of it all.

Ange still had a tea towel in her hand from drying the dishes and all of a sudden she goes running around the room, wafting it and shouting, 'shoooooo'.

I said to Billy, you're going to have clean all of these walls, otherwise we'll get a bill! He said, 'I was only feeding them, Pauline! They come in through the balcony!'

After everything had all been cleaned up, we walked over to the lift in the hotel and there were stickers, saying 'BBC Radio Merseyside' and 'Radio City, Liverpool,' all over it. We knew who was right away. Billy loved stickers. He puts stickers on everything. And why not? He'd used them to redecorate the hotel and make it his own. It did look a bit bland, to be honest.

Stickers are a way Billy likes to express himself – he's so free-spirited.

When one of Billy's house friends, Joe, sadly passed away a few years ago, we went to the funeral parlour to see him, so Billy could say his goodbyes.

The next day the lady at the funeral directors called me up. 'You have to come and see this', she said.

So I went up to the place and every sticker you could think of was all over Joe's coffin. There were stickers for betting shops, 'exit', 'ladies toilets this way', you name it.

He saw a cardboard coffin going past in a hearse once. People had drawn messages on it. I instantly remembered Billy pointing it out and saying he thought it was a great idea to cover it in stickers, instead of drawings. He too had remembered the idea he'd had when we saw the cardboard hearse – and he'd made his own tribute to Joe, in his own way. How lovely is that?

He really is one of the big characters of PSS. These people just make the job worth it. It's memories like these that keep you going… even when times get hard.'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LIVERPOOL PERSONAL SERVICE SOCIETY

TOY LIBRARY

ANCHOR HALL
by St. ANDREWS CHURCH
ADSHEAD ROAD
LIVERPOOL 13

LIVERPOOL PERSONAL SERVICE SOCIETY

Ruth's
Toy Library

- 1940s and 1970s -

Born in 1925, Ruth Bennet-Jones first came to PSS at the very start of her career when, bucking the trend as a woman in 1940s higher education, she went to university to study social work, and did her professional placement with PSS. Despite some initial opposition from her friends, who felt a woman married to a professional man shouldn't have to work, Ruth followed her heart back to PSS in the 1970s, before going on to start up her own PSS service that would touch the lives of many local families with disabled children. An endlessly brilliant and intelligent woman, and equally wonderful storyteller, Ruth is a treasured part of PSS history, and we wish you could've been there to hear her, in her home on Anglesey, as she told us her story...

'I read social sciences at Liverpool University with social reformer Professor Margaret Simey, who, it turns out, was quite a character. It was a very good department. Edinburgh was tied with Liverpool as the two best at the time. I went to Liverpool because I wanted to stay at home – but actually that was a mistake. They expected me to be free in the evenings but... I wasn't. I was at get-togethers with other students, and doing my copious amounts of homework! Writing my essays, and all the rest of it. Eventually I got my qualification. We all did six weeks at PSS as part of our practical training.

Some of my training with PSS was in Bootle which had been so badly damaged during the war. I will never forget that there was one thing of quality that anybody ever had around them - and that was music. You could go into somewhere really damaged and there would always be music coming out of the

radio. Everyone had their radio on – listening to the BBC. I distinctly remember going into one house that was a completely bare. It was falling down and had just been shored up. The floor was just bricks, there was a table, one armchair by the fire which the dad sat in… everyone else sat on packing cases… and there was a chest of drawers. There was a baby in one of the drawers. A baby, and a radio. And that was it. This would have been… ohhhh… I was born in '25 and so it must have been… quite early on… possibly 47/48.

I then went back home, my mum made me go to a ghastly domestic science college for four terms, and then my dad got terribly sick and I wanted to help nurse him. My dad worked during the war and nearly died because he was an asthmatic.

I would see my cases and instead of being able to shut the office door, go home and shut off, I'd think, 'has Johnny run away again? I wonder if that poor woman has a second black eye? Did the police get to that man in time who said he was committing suicide?'

In 1952 I got married, and later had four children. It was once my children had gotten older that I decided to go back to work. There was terrible shock and horror amongst my friends at this: 'You must be getting a divorce or something' they'd said. 'My husband can support me, can't yours?' Of course, back then, if you came from a professional family and had a professional husband, it was really frowned upon for you to go back to work. Women didn't need to be paid because their husbands supported them. I had a husband, but I really enjoyed working. I had a really tough time getting around it, but I went back. And I went back to PSS.

I was doing case work at first. I used to help with marriage problems – there were an awful lot of marriage problems back then - and a lot to do with poverty. I enjoyed it very much. Soon after, I got cancer. I had a mastectomy and when

I went back, my mind had changed. I would see my cases and instead of being able to close the office door, go home and shut off, I'd think, 'has Johnny run away again? I wonder if that poor woman has a second black eye? Did the police get to that man in time who said he was committing suicide?' I couldn't stop thinking about it. I wrote a letter to Robin, the chief executive at the time, and set out my resignation. I went to see him and said I couldn't carry on. He tore up my letter and said... 'Right, we can't lose you, you can do some research for us, then!'

That's when the Toy Library came about.

I don't know if you realise, but back then, the family of a disabled child were totally isolated... rejected. Sometimes by their own families, who thought they must have done something wrong. A ghastly idea; Medieval. They really were very, very lonely. Most husbands had disappeared. I wanted to do something for them. I wanted to research it. So I asked Robin if I could choose to look into it, and he said yes.

I came up with the idea to open up a Toy Library in Liverpool, to bring families with disabled children together. The idea was that we'd have toys there that children could choose and take home for up to a month, then bring them back, and pick another few – and so on and so forth (you'll find children only ever play with one toy for about a month – then it's at the back of the cupboard!). Most of them didn't have toys at home, so this gave them a chance to learn to play. I advertised like mad, and we did it. We opened up in Old Swan.

I had help from two brilliant volunteers. Carol was one of them; she also used to adapt toys so children with disabilities could use them. She raised most of our money – she used to put on all sorts of activities that would keep us going financially. She was marvellous. She had been born on Scottie Road and had never had a settled home because her dad was in the army. When he went on duty they didn't have anywhere to live, so they'd stay with family, friends, anyone who would take them in – she was brilliant. I never bought a toy or did anything without talking to Carol about it first. Then there was Avril, who had been a long-time volunteer. She was very saint-like; sensitive to other people's feelings. She was an inspiration to everyone. We had a driver, too, a volunteer, that would go and pick families up and bring them to us so they could use the service.

The Toy Library wasn't just for the disabled children, though, it was for brothers and sisters of disabled children, too. We knew that the disabled children would take up lots of the mum's time, so we wanted to give their siblings something that they got, too. That was quite a help.

We used to do all kinds of other things with the children, including joining the Lord Mayor's parade, which used to happen every year. We'd dress up as things and make special appearances. One time, I think it was when the current queen got married, two of the children were the king and queen, and the rest were the royal family and courtiers. And I remember in one parade, Carol dressed up as a chimney sweep! It was great fun. I reckoned I had the best job ever – you couldn't have had a better one.

It was a happy, happy time.'

LIVERPOOL
PERSONAL
SERVICE
SOCIETY

PERSONAL SERVICE FOR ALL

Who are we?

For over sixty years we have helped people in distress! Today, despite the growth of formal Social Services, we are needed more than ever before to sustain those who fall through the gaps in the state system. We achieve results by responding quickly to changing conditions by pioneering new and more effective ways of helping and by promoting and encouraging self-help in the community

IN THIS WAY WE PLAY A MAJOR ROLE IN THE AFFAIRS OF MERSEYSIDE

A *changed man*

- 1950s -

In 1953, PSS started the very first family rehabilitation scheme in the country. This was a service that helped families experiencing difficulty to stay together and work through their problems. It was an entirely new way of thinking at the time, and paved the way for the UK's modern-day 'troubled families' agenda. A couple of years after the service first started, PSS worked with a family that had almost reached breaking point...

Agnes was brought up in Yorkshire by her grandmother and experienced an erratic and unstable childhood. She worked tirelessly in the mills before looking for a fresh start and eventually moving to Liverpool. Led on by promises of marriage and a perfect family life, she met someone and fell pregnant, only for him to leave her in the middle of pregnancy. Feeling broken and alone with the daunting prospect of life as a single mum, she had little hope for the future. However, soon after the baby was born, Agnes met a man that changed her life. Peter Mottram saw the beauty inside of Agnes and was instantly drawn to her. He wanted to give her the life she had dreamed of, the life she deserved. On a bended knee he promised to look after her and asked for her hand in marriage.

In the early days it had been wedded bliss, but things got increasingly strained after money troubles started. The couple had no choice but to move in with Peter's mum, causing greater strain on the relationship and the rift between them to grow ever more patent. Agnes was becoming more and more withdrawn as she struggled to take on all of the housework whilst trying to balance time

with her child. When Peter's mum died, she was expected to step up even more and began to crumble under the weight of all of this responsibility. Her husband slowly detached himself from the family and refused to help or engage with anyone. He was clearly struggling with his grief and blamed everything on his wife. With no help or support, she constantly worried that history was going to repeat itself, and that her child's future would mirror her past. She did everything in her power to make sure they had a happy upbringing but this was becoming almost impossible.

The family were in crisis. Things had got so bad in Peter and Agnes' marriage that Peter got work as a seaman to escape the situation, telling his wife, 'At least at sea I can get food and a clean bed.' The work he got was irregular and he often wouldn't contribute to the rent, despite being the only one in the household who received a wage. They regularly missed payments, resulting in them having to constantly move from place to place. There was no stability for Agnes' child or for her. Agnes blamed Peter's detachment from the family on the substandard accommodation that they lived in and believed that if they had somewhere nice and stable he would come back home and settle down. Peter had lost sight of how much his wife cared and had neglected to nurture their relationship in times of great difficulty.

To look up and see my husband's eyes light up the way they used to, that's a feeling I'll never be able to explain.

Desperate for someone to turn to, Agnes contacted PSS about their new family rehabilitation scheme. A PSS social worker, Kirsty, was assigned to the couple. She managed to persuade Mr Mottram to return home and work through their problems together, as a team. He was able to open up and finally let out some of the pain that had been bottled up since the death of his mum. As time went on a real respect was built between the couple and there seemed to be a small flicker of hope that their family could get through this. PSS helped them to manage their budgeting and taught them how to compare the outgoings with what money was coming in. This took a weight off the couple and from then on there was a snowball effect of positive change. Mrs Mottram was able to keep on top

of all the housework whilst keeping a close relationship with her daughter and making sure they had enough time together. Her husband was now working regularly and had contributed significantly to the rent, with no late payments for the last six months. He was a completely changed man and his attitude and outlook were much more positive. Their relationship was beginning to repair and things were on much more solid ground.

PSS continued to work with the couple and visited regularly, once a fortnight, until the time came for them to part ways and start to navigate life on their own as a family, with all that they had learnt. Mrs Mottram couldn't believe it and didn't know how to fully express her gratitude. In a letter to Kirsty she wrote:

'Life has been awful to me. I didn't know if I would ever have this kind of future. The kind that you dream about as a little girl. I worried for my daughter and for so long I blamed myself. You have been nothing but decent to me and your support has never wavered. To look up and see my husband's eyes light up the way they used to, that's a feeling I'll never be able to explain. I wouldn't be where I am now without PSS. Thank you, from the bottom of my heart.'

Doug the dog

- 2018 -

Our Supported Living service is there to support people in their communities. It gives people who need it a home they can call their own – and some stability in life. But it's not just about putting a roof over someone's head; it's about giving people control over their own lives. Our teams empower people to see a real purpose in life, by really doing things at their pace and treating them as human beings. It's as simple as that. And they certainly don't want big praise for this, especially not Natalie, who's been quietly saving people's lives for the past fourteen years. Natalie's about as far from serious as you could imagine, constantly cracking jokes – most often with herself being the brunt of these – and she scoffed at the idea that her story would be included in a book all about PSS – ('Me, are you messing!?'). But despite her huge amounts of modesty, Natalie's dogged determination to do right by the people she supports in this story epitomises not just what our Supported Living service is all about, but the spirit of PSS, too.

'I won an award last month, about being determined. I was really shocked to get nominated. Rachael, one of our directors who nominated me, picked up on this thing I did. I'm not really into bigging myself up, I just get on with my job, but I can tell you the story of what happened with Doug.

I've been with Supported Living for fourteen years now. I was only a baby when I started - 19! This was my first job out of school, and, to be honest, I didn't really know what I was doing at first. My husband was working at one of the PSS Supported Living houses – one which I manage now actually – and he told me about some vacancies. He said he thought I'd be good at it - so that was all I

There's three men living in the house with Doug and having a dog in the house has really helped them all to gain a new sense of responsibility and purpose in life.

needed, I applied and I was made up to get the job at that age.

I didn't know what to expect at all though, it's mad thinking back. I never imagined that I'd be going into this line of work. I thought it would be beauty, hairdressing, something like that. But my eyes have really been opened. It seems really obvious, but I just love making a difference to people's lives, watching the process of them moving in, finding their feet and then just watching them grow and grow. They do things that they never thought they'd be able to do and we help them achieve their goals.

The whole time I've been at PSS, I've known Peter* (Peter's been with Supported Living for about 17 years) and for that whole time I've always known that he wanted a dog. After knowing Peter all this time we've become really close. I've literally grown up with him. Peter is very mischievous, very funny, but also very caring. He has a learning disability and he first moved into Supported Living because he was in an abusive relationship that he managed to get out of. I just remember him sticking 'beware of the dog' stickers all around the house and dropping loads of hints that he'd loved to have a dog living with him - it was made pretty clear! His sister has two dogs and he enjoyed walking them and was always buzzing when he'd spent the day with them. The housing association that looks after the Supported Living house he was living in didn't allow dogs, though, so we couldn't give him what he wanted. But we're all about giving people choice and independence here, so that 'no' just didn't sit right with me. As a support worker, I didn't really understand the possibilities of making this happen and it was only really when I took over as team leader that I started thinking about things properly and how I could help make his wish come true. I didn't want to just leave it, he deserved more.

I took over as team leader in November 2016 and, around the same time, another man who really wanted a dog moved in; he's called Bob*. He still lives with

us. Bob had lived in a hostel before this and had experienced a stroke before moving in to Supported Living. He had been addicted to alcohol his entire life. That lifestyle meant that he had been through a lot, lots of traumatic stuff. After such a chaotic past, he has really settled in Supported Living. Bob had had dogs when he was younger and had lots of great memories of looking after them. Seeing him and Peter get together and really feel excited just talking about dogs made me think. I needed to sort this out. So, that's when I started asking questions that people hadn't asked before. I chatted to Bob's social worker and she was dead helpful. We came up with a plan together.

I went to talk to a doctor who could help to write a letter to the landlord that talked about all the therapeutic benefits of having a dog. I had loads of conversations with the landlord and the housing association about making this happen, about how I'd make sure the house was looked after and how we'd work out a rota and how this could support the men. I tried to find a solution to any problem they thought of and spent ages on it. There were tons of documents to sign, lots of agreements to be made and hours of meetings.

Finally, it was agreed. I'd done it.

Peter and Bob were over the moon!

The next big thing was finding the dog to adopt. The guys had wanted a pug - that's where the name Doug came from, they wanted Doug The Pug, but at first glance of this gorgeous French bulldog I found online, it was love at first sight. So, Doug – the French bulldog, not the pug, was picked. Doug was that cute that a few other people wanted him, though. I got a phone call to say I'd have to come and pay a deposit to reserve him. It was Saturday – my day off! But I couldn't let Bob and Peter down, could I? I popped in the car, whizzed to pick up the deposit and then whizzed over the water (from Liverpool to The Wirral) to collect him. I had the kids with me and everything. Then, the next Tuesday me, Peter and Bob all went together to collect him, stopping at Pets At Home on the way back.

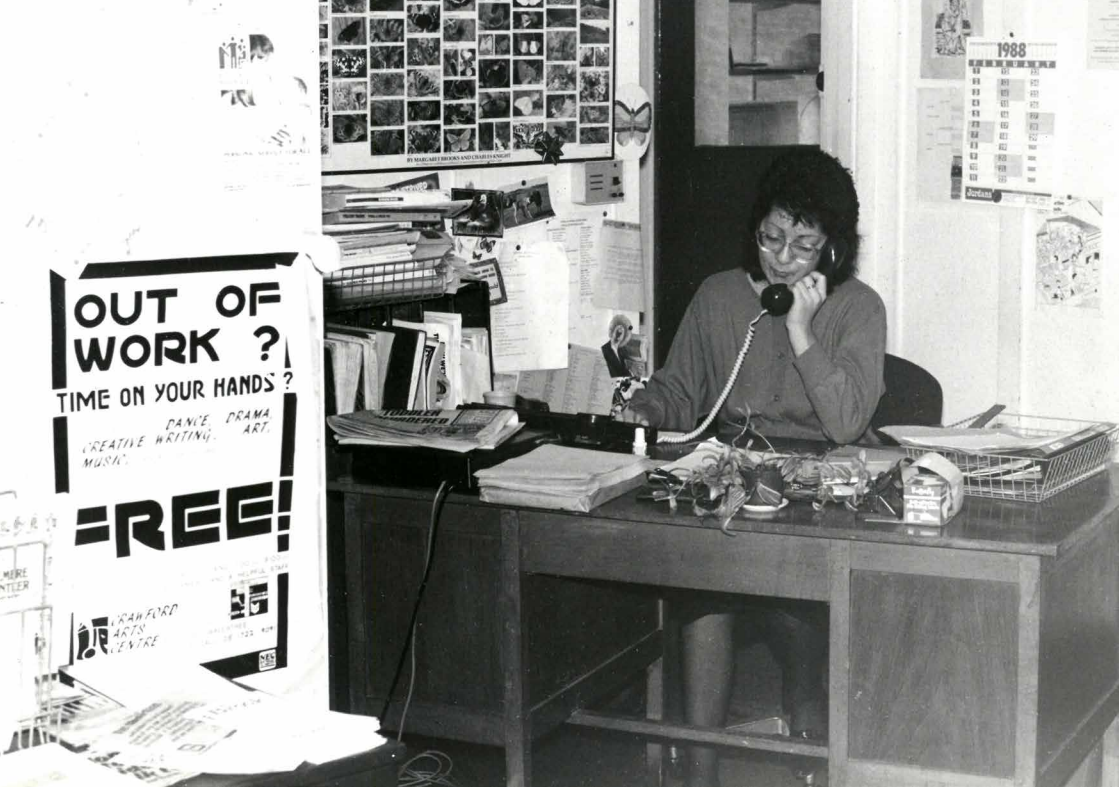
There's three men living in the house with Doug and having a dog in the house has really helped them all to gain a new sense of responsibility and purpose in life. They take it in turns to clean up after Doug, to walk him and Peter's always buying him all kinds of bones and outfits and stuff! But, since having Doug, there really does seem to be more of a warm feeling around the home. That's

what it is now, it's not accommodation, it's a home. It's great.

I've seen a lot since working at this service. There's always some people that really stick out. Like Mary*, she was one of the first people that I supported. She was non-verbal with all the staff, but not with me. She liked me, she must have really trusted me. She always used to call me 'baby girl' and always asked for cuddles. I felt privileged. I've loved the time spent taking groups out for the day, one time sticks in my mind when we took a big group to Alton Towers. One of the women we took has depression and seeing her in stitches all day was just amazing. Another time, me and Rebecca took a couple of men to the seaside on a little trip. We went to Newquay and had about three cream buns every time we stopped for a break from walking. They loved it!

It's the stuff from the start of my time here that I always remember most, stuff that stays with you. Once I started a shift and saw in the notes that a man had been breathing a little strangely during the night, to keep an eye on it. I think it was a new member of staff and I knew this guy better. He was non-verbal so I couldn't just ask him what was wrong but it didn't seem right. I couldn't leave it, so I got someone to cover the shifts and made sure to take him to hospital. And I was right. It turned out that it was something serious and he needed medical attention. There's some scary times in this job, but it's worth it!'

**Names in this story have been changed to protect identities.*


OUT OF WORK ?
TIME ON YOUR HANDS ?
DANCE, DRAMA, ART,
CREATIVE WRITING, MUSIC.
=REE!
CRAWFORD ARTS CENTRE
1988

Better *together*

- 1973 -

In the year of 1973, over 340 troubled young people came through the doors of PSS (or Liverpool Personal Services Society, as we were still called then) for support from one of our volunteer counsellors. Young people frequently needed someone to talk to about family problems and personal relationships. Demand for support was so high, in fact, that we helped schools and colleges set up their own counselling services, so we could reach even more people. Mrs Stern, a social worker at PSS, thought she'd seen it all - but when 16 year old Lez walked in one October day she couldn't have been more wrong. Taking an immediate shine to this misunderstood young man, she knew she had to keep him going...

In the October of 1973, a young boy of 16 contacted the Young Person's Advisory Service for help. He'd watched his dad fall deeper and deeper into alcoholism and could feel himself slipping down the wrong path. He was so desperate not to follow in his dad's footsteps. They'd never had a relationship and he'd spent most of his life being ignored. Growing up in an unstable environment, with no one to turn to, Lez soon become involved with the wrong crowd. He began using drugs as a way to escape his troubles and he soon found himself entering a spiral of self-destruction.

Mrs Stern had been working at PSS for a little over a year. She immediately warmed to Lez and felt empathy towards him. He'd moved out of the house he shared with his dad and into one shared by students and some unemployed people.

Lez was struggling to see eye-to-eye with someone he was sharing a room with, who was the type of person that would look for trouble. He knew that he couldn't be around this person for his own mental wellbeing, and after a few weeks of trying desperately to block him out, he couldn't take this abrasive energy any more.

Feeling so isolated and alone, in the early hours of one morning, Lez tried to take his own life. He told Mrs Stern that so many people had been asking him why he did it, but he didn't want to talk about it. He had the option to go and see a physiatrist, but he didn't want to go. Just a few weeks earlier, Lez had visited hospital and was simply dismissed and told: 'Lay off the drugs and you'll be alright.' This narrow advice had left him with a loss of faith in professionals.

Mrs Stern could see that he was trying to make the best of his situation and was impressed that someone so young could recognise when they needed to make a change.

Lez felt completely deflated and started to become resentful of other people that had managed to find happiness in their lives. The people he had lived with had moved on and left him behind. His friends were finishing their studies and finding success, while he wasn't even sure that he'd be allowed to stay at college. In his mind, college was the only thing that could save him. He thought about what life without a good education could be like and used the opportunity he had to try and better himself. Mrs Stern could see that he was trying to make the best of his situation and was impressed that someone so young could recognise when they needed to make a change. She made him see that his destiny was one that only he could control.

Mrs Stern spent time talking to Lez about the cocktail of drugs that he was taking and the life he was choosing to lead. She slowly started to realise that his lifestyle was far more dangerous than he even knew and things could get out of control if he wasn't careful.

After months of weekly meetings, Lez gradually started to feel happier and started seeing his future as something exciting, rather than a burden.

Mrs Stern helped Lez to realise that the potential to feel empowered was within him and helped him to unlock it. She'd taken the time to really get to know him and had slowly become the only parental figure he'd ever known.

Eventually, Lez became a full time student, studying as a laboratory technician on a grant that Mrs Stern helped him to secure. Even when Lez was doing okay, he knew that he could always pick up the phone and give Mrs Stern a call. This kind of constant was something that Lez has missed in his childhood and to have it as an adult meant that he could keep on going.

A friend *'til the end*

- 1976 -

In 1976, Gill Gargan was seconded to PSS to pilot a youth counselling service, Young Person's Advisory, for a year. Lucky for us, we managed to keep Gill around for just a little while longer – in fact, she's still working for PSS today. In this story, Gill tells us a bit about three of the services she once worked for and the emotional story of Alan, a man she supported while working for our Palliative Care service, and how she helped make his final wishes come true.

'I started working at PSS as part of the Young Persons Advisory, a youth counselling service for 15 – 25 year olds. Initially just set up for a year, it carried on for 25 years before it became an independent service. I also worked for a service called the Arbour Project. It was for pregnant girls that were still at school – and we were part of their support network. Social Services provided nursery nurses, teachers were educated so that the girls could still learn and I worked as their counsellor. It was very interesting getting to know these young women. The girls were amazing! They all really wanted to keep their babies; there wasn't any other option in their minds, but I think they all got a bit of a shock when they gave birth and realised the struggles of motherhood. We were there to help them through this and all their emotions.

It was a great service actually, really life-changing. Two houses were knocked into one in the Anfield area and Social Services would taxi them in and out. Once they were past school age, we didn't just leave them to it, they could come and see us on Thursdays. They didn't come every day because they no longer

needed schooling, but we continued to support them. They'd often tell the other girls who were still pregnant stories about childbirth. Even though this put the frighteners on them, it was great that they didn't need to feel alone.

After this experience, I moved into palliative care at PSS. This was something that I was wary about at first; I knew it would be beyond difficult to see terminally ill people in their final stages of life. What would I be witnessing?

We all know that when somebody is born, the most inevitable thing is that they are going to die; it's the middle bit that can be really complicated. In fact, working with someone and enabling them to have a really good death is honestly brilliant – despite how it might seem at first. A lot of people don't have the opportunity to figure out how they want to spend their last days - they aren't given the chance to plan – but being able to support someone to achieve the death that they want was fabulous – it wasn't sad at all. Working alongside the palliative care nurses and the oncologists was really interesting, too. Oh, there are a lot of tales to tell about this role...

There was one man called Alan. I went to visit him and his wife. They said they'd had a terrible time with those who'd been supporting him so far. His wife met me at the door and warned me that Alan was very angry and that he'd probably take it out on me. I said, 'That's fine, I've dealt with angry people before and it's not a problem.'

I went into the house and he looked at me and said, 'Not another one who's come to sort me out'.

'I've not come to sort you out', I said. 'I've come to ask you what you want.'

When somebody is born, the most inevitable thing is that they are going to die; it's the middle bit that can be really complicated.

We sat down and talked. He told me that he didn't want a funeral director or to pay a lot of money and that what he really wanted was for his body to go to medical science. I made a note of that. He said, 'I'm 500 yards from the cemetery, so I don't want them to charge me £1000 to take me 500 yards up the road. I don't want a hearse, I don't want a coffin. It's all too expensive. As far as I'm concerned they can put me in a box and leave me. Someone can come and cart me off.'

I knew he was angry and understandably feeling a lot of different emotions. I told him I'd do some research and get back to him. As I was leaving that day Alan looked at me and said, 'I like you'.

'I like you, too', I told him. 'Why do you like me?'

'Because you didn't tell me what I can't have, but what I can instead,' he said.

That's what I was there for.

I went away and did some research into what Alan had told me he wanted. I found out you didn't have to have a coffin, you just need a shroud. He wouldn't need a hearse, somebody could take his body in their car, as long as he was covered. I contacted Liverpool University for advice about the potential for Alan's body to be donated to medical science – and they said they'd see what they could do.

I went back and explained all of this to Alan, and he was happy. He told me that he'd asked his friend to take his body in his pickup truck and he already had someone who could make his shroud.

Two weeks later, he died.

I was told that Newcastle University could take him. He ended up with his wish and donated his body to science. He got exactly what he wanted.

It's not just about fading away, it's about living before you go. My mum died when I was 15. She was extremely ill. She said, 'I'm going to die. I don't want to die, but I'm not scared. I'm sorry I'm going, but I don't have a say. I want you to know I'm not frightened.' After she died I had a dream that I saw her and she looked perfect. She looked as she had previously and told me she was absolutely fine. That took all the fear away from me. I have no fear of death. Don't get me wrong, I used to come out of people's houses and have a cry in the car. You see some very sad cases and you get very fond of people but as long as all the support is in place, they go in a peaceful way. That's what success in your role looked like and what a rewarding thing that was.'

ALEX IS KING FOR THE DAY

Courageous youngster steals the royal show

BRAVE youngster Alex Buchanan stole the show today when he presented Princess Margaret with a special bouquet.

Little Alex held out the posy for the Princess after he'd asked mum Lynn: "Is that her?"

Courage

Princess Margaret was visiting Liverpool's Personal Service Society to officially open its new headquarters, the former Beatles Exhibition Centre, in city centre Seel Street.

Alex, 5, from Old Swan, was chosen to greet the Princess, who was dressed in a green chiffon hat and green and blue floral dress, because of the courage he has shown throughout his young life.

By Janet Tansley

He suffered from severe epilepsy and behaviour problems after being born with the rare Sturge Weber syndrome.

But Alex was able to laugh and joke again after pioneering surgery at Walton Hospital to remove the whole left side of his brain.

The courageous boy is a special visitor to PSS. He uses their toy library which provides specially adapted toys and equipment for disabled youngsters.

After meeting Alex, the Princess toured the modern building, a transformation from PSS's former ailing Victorian premises in Stanley Street.

She met volunteers and users of PSS projects which include pioneering schemes for the elderly and community projects to get people living in institutions back into ordinary life.

PSS also has projects for mentally and physically handicapped, financial advisers and special counsellors who help people with psychiatric problems.

The Princess visited the Umbrella Project which acts as a drop-in centre for people with mental health problems.

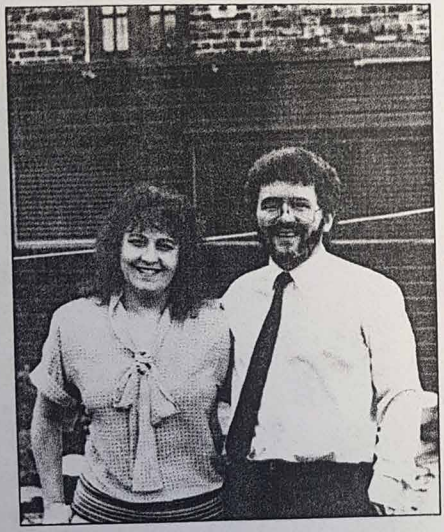
After touring the building the Princess unveiled a plaque and signed the visitors book.

Later she was to open the new extension at Liverpool Dental Hospital and the Flower Festival at St Agnes Church.

Pick of the bunch . . . Alex hands his flowers to the princess

"We built the back extension for Margaret and Eileen"

Pauline and Dave Cowhig



For Pauline Cowhig, husband Dave and family, the notion of community care is an everyday experience. In a seemingly ordinary house in a road in north Liverpool, a quite extraordinary family goes about the business of caring for two elderly women as full members of the household.

Pauline's experience in looking after elderly people began as a nurse on a geriatric ward in Newsham General Hospital. She later became a Care Assistant in a local authority residential home, again looking after elderly people in fairly large numbers. It was whilst doing this work that a friend working for the Society, told her about the alternative to institutional care.

"I was amazed by the idea of looking after someone in my own home," Pauline said, describing her initial reactions. "But when I went round to my friend's house and we met the client and talked, it all seemed so much better than life on the wards - and I've seen what that means for old folk."

That was six years ago. After talking it over with Dave and their son and two daughters, it was agreed, with - not surprisingly - some apprehension as to how it might work out. Initially, they started on 'respite' support, taking in an elderly person temporarily to assist the full-time carer.

Since those early days more permanent enlargements to the family have taken place. Margaret Andrus - nearing ninety - arrived over two years ago, the arrangements having been made through the Society in liaison with statutory social services. Margaret was living alone and having difficulties looking after herself in her own home, and she neither needed nor wanted to go into institutional care. After yet another fall at home, she was admitted to hospital with a broken arm. It was following this latest incident that Pauline started to get to know Margaret and the plans were laid for moving in. This period of familiarisation with those involved in family placements is crucial to identifying the likely outcome, but - just like life itself - it can be an unpredictable business.

Today there is not only Margaret in residence but also Eileen, who is sixty-seven and has spent two-thirds of her life in a psychiatric hospital. This placement is an example of the other side of the scheme, involving people from long-stay hospitals, either for those with mental health problems or learning difficulties.

"Eileen loves the kids and they really get on well," said Pauline. "We have seen what a home can do for someone so institutionalised. As time goes by you start to notice things, little things, but they tell you Eileen is happier here."

Eileen arrived eighteen months ago and at long last there is somewhere she can call home - thanks to a generous-hearted family.

with the PSS Adult Placement Service contact Marion Armstrong on 0151 702 5555.

More than *meets the eye*

- 1990s and beyond -

PSS Shared Lives carers Dave and Pauline have dedicated their lives to supporting people to make the most of theirs. For the last 30 years, they've been welcoming people from all walks of life into their home and into their family - providing them with support to stay healthy, happy and safe and fulfil their goals. Not only have Dave and Pauline given the people they have supported a warm and cosy place to live, but a place in their hearts, too. If there's one thing we know for sure, it's that there's always more to people than meets the eye and you should never judge a book by its cover, as Dave's story proves.

'The people we support had lives before they came to us. They had families and adventures. That doesn't need to stop just because things turned out a little differently for them. It's our job to make sure it keeps going. Although we've been doing it for a long time, it's never tedious. Never boring.

We've met some real characters, you know! I'll tell you all about them.

Let me start with John.

John was living in sheltered accommodation before we met him. All he had was this bed on the floor and a photograph of himself in the Army. Nothing else. He had to go into hospital for something and when he came out, the council had knocked his house down. This man had worked all his life and in between the First and Second World War, he played as lead cornet in the brass bands. And he

was left with nothing. Instead of going into more sheltered accommodation, he came to live with us and he was incredible. One time he set fire to the curtains and he was like, 'I think I made a hole in the curtains'. I just went, 'Yeah, you definitely have, like!' He was family, you know? We were a family.

Another lady, Joanese from Indonesia, had short-term memory loss. She was about 80. We were supporting her as part of the PSS Home from Hospital service (which is still around today as part of Shared Lives). It supports people who have been discharged from hospital but can't cope on their own at home. We'd go to Chinatown with Joanese and visit all the restaurants because she knew everyone! She'd speak to all of the waiters in Chinese and they'd make a nice fuss of her. Bizarrely, at the time we used to look after students from Bilbao in Spain. A young lad was living with us at the same time to help improve his English. Joanese would go into the kitchen to chat to them in their language. She made them feel really at home. How she knew how to speak Spanish like that I'll never know. I think her husband may have travelled to Spain at some point, but we could never question her because of the memory loss. I'd just sit there and think... the life she must have had and the things she must have seen! She was supposed to be with us for a six-week turnaround at first, but she actually ended up staying until she died. I think she was here about five or six years. PSS gave us whatever we needed to support her.

There wasn't a house in our road that she hadn't been in. She'd say she was locked out, but her key would be in her pocket, and she'd score a cup of tea and biscuits.

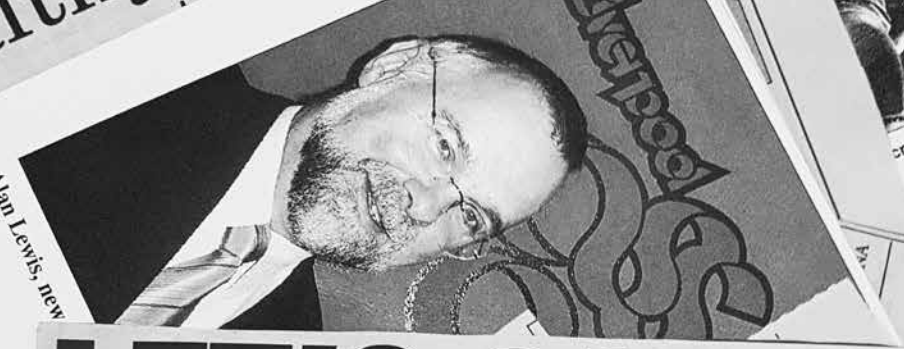
Agnes, a lady that came to us after Joanese, had lived all over the world. When we were organising her stuff, we found her passport. She was wearing this big fancy hat on her picture. She said, 'I've been everywhere but never outside the British Empire'. There's even this picture of her outside a big white house in the Bahamas, standing next to Prince Edward, Wallis Simpson and the entire cricket team. Crazy! I remember her saying that if she died no one would know. That broke my heart. We did find out that she'd had a little boy, but he'd passed

away. I think as he'd gotten older something had gone really wrong. His name was Bill and we managed to find his grave. That led to her brother getting in touch with her after 30 years. It was all because she'd come to live with us… she was now registered, you see. She'd left a trail! It was amazing that this gave her the opportunity to reconnect with her family.

The people we support had lives before they came to us. They had families and adventures.

We then got introduced to Alma. She had bounced around the social care system for years until she came here. The conditions she was living in at the hospital were awful and you could tell it had had a real effect on her. I helped her to eat better and eventually she lost seven stone. It was fantastic! She was no longer on walking sticks and she got her lovely brown hair back. Honestly, the staff didn't recognise her. They just kept saying, 'Is Alma not coming today?' She was really funny, too. There wasn't a house in our road that she hadn't been in. She'd say she was locked out, but her key would be in her pocket, and she'd score a cup of tea and biscuits. It all seems so long ago now; I think Alma came about 20 years ago. She was just lovely.

Shared Lives really is fantastic because these people slowly become a real part of the family. They develop a history. It's very special. They've got a footprint now and that's what Shared Lives is all about.'



LET'S CARE FOR YOUNG CARERS

By PETRA MANN

Social Affairs Reporter

Fears for children

CHILDREN as young as eight across Merseyside are having to look after disabled or drug-addicted parents.

Children are caring for parents affected by physical and mental disabilities or drug and alcohol abuse.

The Personal Services Charity believes around 300 children across Merseyside are solely responsible for their parents.

The charity said extra pressure on youngsters leads to unfinished homework and children feeling tired during lessons.

Merseyside-based PSS has been going for the past 85 years and 10 years ago it commissioned research into the needs of young carers.

As a result, PSS Sefton Young Carers was set up with projects in St Helens and Wirral.

Liz Gray, the organisation's children's services manager, said it is vital young carers receive help.

"We offer a wide range of support and services to assist them and their families. We include counselling, information, social work support, creative activities and skills for life.

"Help with homework can be given and we can give youngsters breaks from caring.

"But, most important of all, we can let them know we care."

Co-ordinator for the Children's Society's Youth Carers Initiative Jenny Frank says children can suffer long-term effects of caring from a young age.

"We know from our research with adults who were child carers that their career prospects suffer.

"If a child is busy looking after a parent or brother or sister they can't always devote enough time to school work and it can often be extremely difficult for parents relying on their own children.

"The whole family needs support to avoid children being put in this difficult position."

Ms Frank says that families are not always aware the responsibility child carers carry.

"Many families simply do not know of the situation the child is in and they are not always fully aware of help available to them.

"We would urge families in need to contact their GP or social services. There is help available for those who need it."

petramann@liverpoolecho.co.uk

Our *Liverpool Miss*

- 1980s -

In the 1930s, a young Helen Forrester worked as an 'office girl' for PSS under the guidance of Dorothy Keeling and Frances Peck. She helped with administrative duties and she was a general support, stepping in whenever she was needed. Little did anyone know what was ahead for 'Miss Forrester'. Helen became a successful author and an important pillar in local history, detailing what it was like to live in the desperately poor Liverpool that she knew whilst growing up. She wrote books such as 'Twopence to Cross the Mersey', 'Liverpool Miss' and 'By the Waters of Liverpool', which references some of the work happening at PSS. In a speech written by Helen and delivered during a special celebratory event here in the 1980s, she told of her experiences working for early PSS – or Liverpool Personal Services Society, as she'd have known it. She was even thankful for the occasional telling off from Dorothy Keeling about her grammar, noting that it came in quite a bit handy later in life...

'Today, I feel that my life has come full circle. Fifty years ago I was the society's office girl. As I stand before you today, I can see the progression and change that has occurred in the last fifty years. You're all still filling in the cracks and more importantly being good listeners. There are not many people left who will listen while you talk through your problems, fewer still who will remain impartial. I remember so well the quiet attentiveness of both voluntary and paid staff and watched as people were allowed to talk so freely.

There is no answer to many of life's woes; they have to be endured. They are

rooted too firmly in tradition, the political system, the current myths and popular beliefs or just appalling bad luck. Talking to somebody sympathetic can sometimes make everything a little less painful.

One of the best things that is happening in England as of late is that of unemployed people helping the elderly, the sick and those with learning disabilities. It's a movement that is giving new purpose and meaning to their lives. I think it means that people are beginning to face the reality that we are not just going through a depression that will pass. We're also going through an industrial revolution; vast numbers of hands are no longer needed. We have to find something other than the idea that we are

We have to find something other than the idea that we are only as good as our wage packet, to make our lives meaningful!

only as good as our wage packet, to make our lives meaningful!

Working at the society was a great starting point for me. I learnt so much and working with such hard working women only elevated my ambitions. It was a real Liverpool hub, filled with such genuine, funny people. I remember working late in one of the rooms in Stanley Street and looking up at the skylight to see a huge rat sitting there staring back at me. I jumped so hard with fright that the rat fell off its perch. The next morning, we found it stiff and very dead under my chair.

Quietly brilliant. Full of inspiration.

I lived for the mid-morning cup of tea at the office. Since I made it, I always treated myself to three biscuits instead of one. I think the ladies started to become suspicious as the office usually got through a tin of biscuits surprisingly quickly.

I was lucky to be a little office girl! As I was working and contributing to the National Health Care System, I was entitled to the care of a general practitioner. If I'd been a housewife it would be very different. Women and children at home were not covered by the medical services. I remember the waiting rooms of the society being so over crowded, not only by half-starved mums, but with women in desperate need of medical attention, dental help… even spectacles. Despite how busy it was no one was every turned away and the door was always open.

The senior staff in those days provided me with many role models. I longed to look as quietly elegant as Miss Frances Peck, and as soon as I could find a penny for hairpins I put my hair up in a bun just as she had, and wore it like that for years. Then there was lovely Miss Muriel Wilson, the assistant secretary. God had given her such a lovely face! Then, when I worked in Bootle with Miss Veronica Hughes, I learned from her patience under an incredible load of work, dedication to the task in hand and what a warm heart could do for people. They were all extraordinarily good to me.

Another person that fascinated me, though I only saw him when I took him up in the lift, was Mr Larry Rathbone. He came from such a famous family and was so young and handsome, second in my heart to only the Prince of Wales! You have no idea how disappointed I was when, occasionally, he would bound up the stairs to the committee room rather than wait for the lift!

When the School of Social Science was established in the University of Liverpool, their students came to us to do practical work. The society began to build up a library and whenever their supervisor forgot to lock the cupboard I'd sneak in and borrow a book. I learned that professionals studied people's lives in the abstract, as statistics… as behaviour patterns. It introduced me to the world of theory, in which I was to spend 34 years of my life as the wife of a well-known theoretical physicist.

Despite how busy it was no one was every turned away and the door was always open.

One delightful thing that the Society did was to have afternoon tea parties for the old age pensioners. Some old ladies wouldn't attend because they didn't have a coat and were too humiliated to go in a shawl. We managed to receive donated coats and made a lot of people very happy.

This is a good day to remember the special contribution this unassuming organisation made to the city. Quietly brilliant. Full of inspiration. Here's to another great year ahead…'

The *Long Way Home*

- 1972 -

When Somali-born Abdi Mohammed learned that his mum was dying, he had to make the excruciating decision of giving up his lifelong pension so he could have the money to return home, and say goodbye. In 1972, when unemployment rates were among some of the highest they'd been since the 1930s, there was a lot of uncertainty about what the future would hold for Abdi, whose plans to retire from his work as a seaman and live out the rest of his years in his native country, Africa, were incredibly close to his heart. Unsure about what he could do, he got in touch with PSS...

Mr Mohamed had worked as a coal trimmer on ships from 1949 – 1970. His job was very important as he made sure the bunkers close to the boiler room were filled with coal so that the furnaces could be fired up. This helped with the smooth, swift sailing of the ship.

In 1938, he faced the heartache of his mum falling ill. As a seaman, he was so far from home and couldn't bear the thought of her suffering alone. How could he get back to her? It was too expensive on his current wage - he sent a lot of his money back to his family in Africa.

When the time came to ask his boss for help, he had to make an impossible decision. He was given permission to visit his mum on one condition: Abdi would have to give up his hard-earned pension so he could receive the relatively small lump sum of £300 that would take him back home. Abdi couldn't live with the

regret of not saying goodbye and so he took the money, despite it being only a fraction of what he'd earned, and visited his homeland.

Holding his mum's hand as she slipped away, he knew he had made the right decision. However, he couldn't help but think about the future of his family. He didn't have any way to support them and knew that without his pension, they would struggle to survive. In 1970, he contacted PSS asking for some advice on how he could get his pension reinstated. Mr Mohamed longed to travel back to Africa and retire, living out the rest of his life at home. For years he had been away at sea, continuing to support his family, and felt that he'd already missed out on so many years; so many missed moments and memories he'd never be a part of.

Holding his mum's hand as she slipped away, he knew he had made the right decision. However, he couldn't help but think about the future of his family. He didn't have any way to support them and knew that without his pension, they would struggle to survive.

Within weeks Abdi received a response from one of PSS's social workers, Mrs Richardson. She was completely compelled by his story and felt so determined to secure the future he deserved. She had been used to helping people that had been separated from their families, but this was a different situation: a hardworking man single-handedly looking after his family, a million miles away from home. This was a selfless act that she couldn't ignore.

It took many weeks of research to trace his original employer. After speaking to the company on the phone, she was disappointed to learn that this was an irreversible transaction, one that couldn't be undone. Mrs Richardson was told that Abdi could still seek legal advice but the tone of this suggestion left her feeling anything but confident.

Don't stand in the way of his children seeing him one last time. Do the right thing.

Eventually Mrs Richardson asked general secretary, Mrs Kay, to take over the reins. In a letter to his employer, she wrote, 'This Somali seaman had to surrender his pension. Imagine that choice. Fearing for your future survival but unable to give up the chance to say one final goodbye to your mum. It's the easiest yet most impossible decision one could ever make. He'd worked for over 30 years at sea and the sum of £300 that he received only amounts to six years of the weekly pension he would have received. Don't stand in the way of his children seeing him one last time. Do the right thing.'

And that they did.

Mrs Kay may have only been at PSS for a few years, but, like many of the women who had stood in her position, she was an unstoppable force. After providing a case filled with big-hearted passion, Abdi was able to travel back to Africa and live out the rest of his years with his family. After spending his life travelling across oceans, he'd finally made it back home.

Anyone in *difficulty*

- 1928 -

Dorothy Keeling was a formidable figure in the social work movement in the first half of the 20th century and one of the women that helped found PSS. Her name may not be as recognisable as our other founder's, Eleanor Rathbone, yet Dorothy was anything but in the shadows. She was someone that would stop at nothing in her fight to evoke major change throughout Liverpool. Below is an extract written by Dorothy, taken from our annual report from 1928, demonstrating those core PSS values that have never wavered throughout the years.

'More than half a century ago, society often blamed the poor for their own circumstances and were sure that the blame could only lie with them. Thankfully, the experience of war had taught people that a family, whatever their income, needs individual treatment. Relief without personal service is simply useless to bringing health and happiness to those in trouble.

Here, at the Liverpool Personal Services Society, we aim to do the opposite. We help anyone in difficulty no matter who they are or what their background is. A mum needs a home for her child, a son for his aged parent, a working girl knows of nowhere to spend her week's holiday, a boy would like to emigrate or a widow in a house too large for her own needs… Nobody is ever left out.

We formed in 1919 and helped over 1,430 people. It's so wonderful to be sitting here writing this knowing our rapid growth can be shown by the fact that in 1927 the number of people reached 11,524. Every year that number will

increase and our responsibilities will grow heavier. However, we must never forget that the work is its own abundantly satisfying reward. We aim to work with those in difficulty rather than for them; helping them to have renewed courage and independence and, where possible, giving them that new start in life which is so essential.

We help anyone in difficulty no matter who they are or what their background is.

One of our most popular services is the Old People's Welfare Society. PSS is in close touch with about 800 old people. Each person is invited to a social afternoon held once a month. In the summer country drives and garden parties are arranged. The appreciation is really quite touching. 'It's so nice', said one, 'to have something which we don't actually need.' Many of them come along before the doors are even opened and no one ever wants to leave. Tea is provided, followed by a simple entertainment, and audience could be any more enthusiastic than them.

'Deserving' and 'undeserving' are forbidden words in our office. We believe that impacting people's lives for the better – physically, morally, and spiritually – is where the hopes of Liverpool lie.'

Three's company

- 2002 and beyond -

TRIO is a service we offer in Wales, which, since 2002, has been supporting people living with memory impairment to get out there and live their lives to the full. We pair two people with similar interests, who also happen to experience memory impairment, with one of our PSS companions, like Jude, who is trained to support people living with memory impairment. Together, companions and people we support, like Anne and Doreen, get out and about in the community, share everyday (and not-so-everyday) experiences and make some really great friendships – as Jude's story shows.

'I used to support two lovely ladies called Anne and Doreen, both with early onset dementia. Both ladies had a sense of humour and most of our days were spent giggling. I often brought them to my own home to sit and relax.

We were at my house one very sunny lunchtime and decided to have some food in the garden. It was the summer holidays so my son Iwan was at home. He didn't want to sit with us ladies for lunch so he took himself off to his room.

We all enjoyed being outside and sat there for a good hour or so. Eventually we decided to make a move and go shopping. Anne led the way back into the house and stopped abruptly in the doorway.

'What's that noise?' she asked, sounding worried.

'It's only Iwan.' I told her, in my most reassuring voice.

'It's not!' she stated, quite forcefully, 'I definitely heard someone!'

I assured her again, 'It'll be Iwan.'

Every time I think about it I get a lump of joy in my throat at the memory.

At this point, Anne was still stood in the doorway, neither inside nor out. She looked at me with a really cross look on her face, which was unusual because Anne never frowned. She very sternly told me…

'It wasn't me! There's someone here!'

Finally, the penny dropped. Anne had forgotten my son was home and mistaken what I was saying to her. She thought that instead of saying 'Iwan', I was saying the noise was, 'You – Anne!' I'm glad to say that as soon as I explained the misunderstanding all the giggling was resumed twofold!

Another lovely moment was from a few years ago. PSS went to watch the Christmas panto in Old Colwyn. It was quite stressful to organise everyone to get there as the Christmas rush was in full swing. The weather was horrendous but we all managed to get there in time, despite being completely soaked and windswept. After dropping the citizens off and finding somewhere to park, we decided that we wouldn't let a little rain dampen our day!

We all settled down to watch the show and everyone soon got into the booing, hissing and shouting, 'HE'S BEHIND YOU!' As with all pantomimes, there was the usual underlying love story and it was when the heroine sang her song that a really special moment happened. She sang a couple of verses of an old love song but when the music finished our TRIO gang took over with the next verse. The song lasted an unexpected five minutes longer than planned and each and every person sang their heart out. The theatre was in silence and awe. When the song was finished the whole audience, as well as the cast, broke out into applause. I'm not an emotional person but it gave me such a warm glow. Every time I think about it I get a lump of joy in my throat at the memory. Even the cast had to take a little time to get back into the plot of the show, as you could see they had also been touched by our friends.'

LIVERPOOL ECHO: 27 January 1989

Sprightly Nesta guest of honour

at birthday party for Society

SWEET CHARITY'S PERSONAL TOUCH

THE biggest charity on Merseyside may be 70 years old on Sunday — but veteran volunteer Nesta Owen is even older!

Nesta won't let on just how much older, but she was visiting families in the old slums with Liverpool Personal Service Society just a few years after it started.

More

And Nesta, awarded the British Empire Medal for her charity work, is still running errands for the elderly and handicapped, calling for visits and chatting.

The Liverpool Personal Service Society is expecting to have to cater for more and more old folk in years to come.

Merseysiders are living longer, and nine out of ten of those over 80 are on their own, said director Robin Currie.

The Bishop of Liverpool, the Right Reverend David Sheppard, has agreed to make a nationwide broadcast on Sunday to appeal for funds to help LPSS sustain and develop its work.

He will tell Radio 4 listeners that old folk are all too often left alone, cold, hungry and desperately trying to make ends meet.

LPSS workers are helping them now and looking to the future, he will say.

Nesta, who is one of 800 volunteers, will be a guest of honour at the celebration birthday party in its Stanley Street offices next week.

The charity runs an adopt-a-granny scheme, has sheltered homes and provides care for old folk having to adjust after the death of a loved one or a long spell in hospital.

LPSS has made waves in many different fields since it started on January 29, 1919.

Works

It pioneered the Citizens Advice Bureaux — mainly to help families bombed and evacuated in World War II — and Age Concern.

Today it works with single parents, ethnic groups, the mentally ill, teenagers, the terminally ill and children.

Two aims are paramount — giving people a say in the way they are helped, and finding alternatives to care in institutions.

The principle comes together in the latest trailblazing LPSS project, a support scheme to be a "good relative" to handicapped people.

Volunteers will turn up to give regular help, perhaps with baths, bedtimes or trips out.

In step ... Liverpool Personal Service Society staff led by director Robin Currie (left) and chairman John Cellaway

By Lesley Hussell

Nesta Owen ... veteran

experience of caring, for example l
their own parents or working in
home. Full training is provided,
clients are carefully matched and
ments are carefully monitored and
by PSS.

"I hope that many Southport res
come forward and offer their servi
ers," said Maria.

For more information about becom
with the PSS Adult Placement Service contact
Marion Armstrong on 0151 702 5555.

The *Cohen legacy*

- 1942 -

William Cohen worked as a colonel during the First World War. After the war he joined PSS, supporting our then general secretary, Frances Peck, someone who would prove instrumental to fulfilling his final wishes...

During the depths of war, William Cohen not only looked out for those that were fighting in battle, he also took the time to understand them and build friendships that would last forever. However, he couldn't help but think of all the things they had left behind when they went to war. All of their missed opportunities. Cohen's legacy wasn't destined to be extra special. He would have been remembered for being a good man. He'd experienced all life had to offer. He'd fallen in love and married, fought for his country and had adventures that could fill volumes. Despite the hardship of war, his life had been filled with wonderful moments. However, it was something that he left behind with PSS after his passing that really was extraordinary.

In the March of 1942, Frances Peck, the woman at the helm of PSS, received a letter from a man who had been a part of William Cohen's battery in the First World War. It informed her that the Colonel had left a sum of money in his will to be shared out between the remaining men from his brigade. Originally a close friend of Cohen's, Mr Cross, was asked to take on the responsibility of sharing out the money. However, before he could find any of the ex-servicemen, he too passed away and the money was abandoned.

Cohen had been extremely explicit in his will that the money should be given to those that followed him to France in 1915. In painful detail he retold what his men had gone through. Saying, 'It was simply no life'. He knew the risks they'd taken and how far away from home they'd travelled, leaving lots behind. His last wish was to give something back.

The next letter came from the widow of Mr Cross who knew the significance of Mr Cohen's wishes. She'd heard wonderful things about PSS from a few of her friends and knew that they could be the answer. She suggested that PSS should act as co-trustees in the event that another ex-serviceman dies before the money is shared out.

She went ahead to fill every newspaper in Liverpool with appeals for anyone that knew anything about the men that had been with Colonel Cohen all those years ago.

Frances Peck agreed straight away and set about to finally distribute the money to their rightful places. However, this proved much more difficult than she first realised. No matter who she called or where she looked, she couldn't find any of the men that formed Cohen's brigade. However, Frances wasn't a woman that ever let a little obstacle like that stop her. She went ahead to fill every newspaper in Liverpool with appeals for anyone that knew anything about the men that had been with Colonel Cohen all those years ago.

After months of radio silence, she received a letter from a Mr Jones. He told her of his elation when he had unfolded a copy of the Echo and seen the face of his old comrade. He told Frances how much of a friend Cohen was to all of the men and that he'd been their pillar of strength when they didn't think they were going to make it. Frances couldn't have been happier to hear about Cohen's impact, but she was still no closer to finding all of the men. She turned the paper over with a sigh and left it on her desk.

Hours passed and after another fruitless search, she was ready to have one last call out for information. As she reached for the phone, something caught her eye. Pinned to the back of the letter she'd read earlier, in tidy slanted handwriting, was over twenty names of the men from 'C' battery 275 Brigade. It had been right in front of her this whole time.

Thanks to Frances' steely determination, Cohen would get his rightful legacy after all.

Our *right hand woman*

- 1934 -

Frances Peck is one of the focal women of PSS's early days. She became involved with the organisation way back in 1929, when she joined as a shorthand typist. However, her determination and ambition would soon propel her to become district head, then assistant secretary and quickly after, in 1934, she succeeded Dorothy Keeling to become general secretary.

Dorothy Keeling was one of the founding members of PSS, and her reputation for having exacting standards meant that many at PSS felt a bit trembly in her presence. She was a formidable woman, and was known to work so hard that she would burn herself out and need long periods of absence, which she called being on 'the bench'. By all accounts, she was a difficult woman to impress, so when Frances Peck became her right-hand woman, it said an awful lot about who she was. Dorothy said, '… it was partly due to her knowledge of the whole working of the society as well as her ability, her loyalty and her capacity for hard work, that I was able to leave everything in her hands – both when I had my long leave of absence and during my lengthy sittings on the bench.' It was clear that Frances was trusted enough to swim in the deep end and take control whenever Dorothy needed her to step up.

As general secretary, which as a bit like a chief executive back then, Frances Peck led PSS through the devastation of the Second World War, leading it to become the main organisation people in need could turn to. In May 1941 during the Blitz, PSS staff at its Stanley Street offices dealt with 600 enquiries

a day from people who had been bombed out. However, at the end of the war Frances faced an even bigger challenge – what would PSS do now? The threats and uncertainties of the war years were gone but, even more challenging was that the social changes, which PSS had pioneered and fought for, were now incorporated into a new Welfare State and National Health Service. A home help service, founded by PSS in Liverpool in 1943, had become of such importance that it was incorporated into local authority provision. Dental care and other health services became a part of the rights of all citizens under the NHS.

Frances' vision, together with her concern about inequality and disadvantage, was vital in the 1940s and 1950s, as PSS re-invented itself and demonstrated that it had an essential role at a time when many charities were folding up. She was awarded an MBE in 1945 and remained a central part of the society until the last few remaining years of her life. In the words of Dorothy Keeling, PSS 'prospered exceedingly under her inspiration and guidance.'

Frances once said that the most important thing about PSS was a simple yet difficult idea, that of 'personal service'.

Following her retirement, Frances had a remarkable 'third age career' being of valuable assistance to many individuals and organisations, making a real difference. She really understood the importance of innovation and recognised that the solutions to social problems required a variety of skills, some which PSS did not control. This led her to forge partnerships with others. In the 1950s she joined with PSS's Liverpool Improved Houses scheme (now Riverside Housing Association), the Family Service Unit and staff from several departments in Liverpool City Council to create a rehabilitation project for homeless families in danger of disintegration.

Frances once said that the most important thing about PSS was a simple yet difficult idea, that of 'personal service'. She wanted people to receive individually-tailored help and not uniformed, faceless advice. The work of Frances Peck lives on through PSS today – its very survival and existence are a testimony to that.

Laying down *the law*

- 1945 -

The Poor Man's Lawyer service was the first iteration of the service we now know as Legal Aid. PSS first became associated with this service in 1925 when PSS provided its office accommodation, clerical services and social work. During this time, many members of the legal profession volunteered at evening sessions held twice a week at PSS offices, staying long after their working day was done for no fee at all. It was designed for people who couldn't afford a solicitor. They would be put in front of a lawyer and given friendly advice on how to settle a matter without it going to court. This was a very innovative idea at the time and the service had a great impact on many people's lives. In 1945, there were around 3000 applicants coming to the service for anything from landlord and tenant disputes to road accidents and advice for those seeking divorce. This service supported many of the poorest people in society to get the justice that they deserved.

Mrs Ford had recently lost her husband and was feeling overwhelmed and numb. She came to PSS in a in a state of heartbroken desperation, unable to see how she could get herself out of this hole. There were lots of bills to settle and it was hard for her to know where to start as her husband had always been the one to deal with any financial problems. All she wanted was to grieve for the love she'd lost.

She had no other family in England and no one to turn to. The house she'd been buying with her late husband was too big for her to live in alone and the

All she wanted was to be still and grieve for the love she'd lost.

mortgage would be too expensive. Most of her furniture was bought on a hire purchase and the insurance company were refusing to pay the amount. They said that because her husband had already suffered with a weak heart at the time they got insured, there was no way that they'd give her the money.

Mrs Ford was directed to the Poor Man's Lawyer and managed to obtain a grant from a kind donor to keep some of the furniture. It was the kindness of those with money to spare that allowed this service to work. Many people volunteered their own funds to help people get back on their feet. PSS then introduced her to an insurance advisor who negotiated with the insurance company.

PSS explained Mrs Ford's difficult situation and appealed to them personally. The claim was paid and Mrs Ford immediately felt lighter. PSS were also on hand to help sell her house and buy a smaller one much more suited to her needs. With the burden taken off her shoulders, she felt like she could walk out into the world and begin to forge a new future for herself.

Liver Bird
Lucy

- 1936 -

PSS has always been passionate about making sure people always have a choice. Sometimes, that has meant respectfully opposing strong-held beliefs, acting without judgement to provide an alternative way for people who don't necessarily hold the widely accepted views of the time to heart, or who have gone another way with their lives, as Lucy's story, which unfolded in 1930s Liverpool, perfectly encapsulates.

In the midst of the Great Depression that had hit Liverpool like a tonne of bricks, Lucy, a mum of six, found herself drowning in society's pressures. She felt increasingly lost and disconnected, even from her own children, and feared that the walls of her marriage would surely crumble too.

In 1936, Lucy discovered that she was pregnant with her seventh child. As she heard the news, looking down and touching her stomach, she was completely torn. How could she bring another child into their lives? She was already struggling and couldn't bear the thought of having someone else to think about. Lucy already felt that she'd neglected to be a good enough mum. She was sure she'd steered her children down the wrong path, her teenage boys constantly in and out of trouble. The only person she blamed was herself. Lucy knew that another child could push her over the edge.

A few weeks later, Lucy suffered a miscarriage. Despite her sadness, she was ashamed to be filled with a sense of relief, a sense that this had been a blessing.

Lucy had heard about birth control, but only whispers and passing comments. No one really understood what it was. Liverpool didn't have a wealth of information about contraception or many options for women during this time. There was a strong Catholic heritage rooted in the city and contraception was still considered to be very taboo. It was difficult to find solid advice anywhere. People like Lucy, who had very little money, found themselves in the hands of people who weren't real experts. They couldn't provide safe support and sometimes even offered dangerous solutions to unwanted pregnancy.

Lucy was a Roman Catholic and knew that looking for help with birth control was going against some of the things that she stood for, and she battled with severe guilt. A friend heard about her dilemma, and advised her to contact PSS. Lucy was introduced to a specialist advisor, and welcomed with open arms. She felt secure that her best interests would be kept at heart. Together, Lucy and her PSS advisor talked about the next steps and how she could begin to move forward. She still felt an awful lot of guilt, but never once did she feel judged by anyone at PSS.

Meanwhile, the Archbishop found out that members of his church were receiving advice about birth control from PSS. The church firmly believed that the purpose of a marriage was to continue to produce children. An organisation giving advice about birth control was something that the Archbishop could simply not accept. He immediately issued a statement asking any Roman Catholics associating with PSS to withdraw their support. When Lucy got the news, she felt sick. She was stuck between the faith that had shaped the woman she had become and her own happiness.

Lucy was forced to cut off contact with the women advising her at PSS. Confused and conflicted, she felt certain that the God she'd grown up with wouldn't want her to suffer. She prayed and prayed looking for some form of guidance, until one day, whilst taking a walk through Liverpool, she looked up towards the landmark Liver Birds and was reminded that they weren't the only ones watching over her city. There were others who were unconditionally there for the people of Liverpool, too. It was then that she made up her mind.

Lucy returned to PSS. Despite her faith and her beliefs, she knew that this was the right choice for her. PSS had accepted her. They'd lost colleagues and friends

There were angels all around the city who wanted to help and she'd found some in the most unlikely of places… tucked away in a little office on Stanley Street.

as a result of the Archbishop's response to the service and, despite everything, they continued to give her their time – and she felt a sense of belonging. With PSS's help, Lucy realised that she wasn't alone. She held her head high.


PSS

More than *just a job*

- 1990s and early 2000s -

Many people who worked for PSS in the 1990s and early 2000s will remember it as a time when PSS began to transform; to expand, responding to the changing world around us with creative ways to reach new people. PSS secured a whole host of contracts, allowing us to set up new services, take on new staff and work with even more volunteers. All of this growth meant we needed someone to come in and make sure PSS people were the best they could be. That's when we took on Julie, our first ever training manager. But, in true PSS style, Julie didn't just use her skills in training and development to support our staff; she used the opportunity to help many other people in need of a hopeful new path.

'It was an amazing time to be joining PSS, when we were having this expansion.

PSS was filled with all of these amazing people and was such a lovely contrast to the job I'd been in before. At PSS I always had the freedom to be creative and really use my imagination. Everyone was so enthusiastic about the work and you could really get in touch with exactly why people were doing the job – because of the values.

In the late 90s I got quite a lot of funding to run what we called 'The Learning Base'. It was aimed at people who had been unemployed for a long time and was designed to give them some skills and confidence to get back into work. There were three people using that service and they went out afterwards and volunteered; both at PSS and other organisations.

Then, in the early 2000s, when the European Union was putting lots of money into developing Liverpool, we got European Social Funding to keep training people for work, so that was fantastic. We worked with other agencies, so the people who used the service didn't just have the chance to work for PSS, but also go on to other places. There was one person, I think she became a Shared Lives carer in the end, who sticks out in my mind. She was unemployed, and when we met her, had very little self-esteem. She was very low and felt lonely.

It's those little memories that make working for PSS an absolute joy.

At the end of the course, she came up to me and said that the best thing about it was that she needed a diary now. She said that when she was unemployed, there was no reason for her to have one – she felt she never needed to be anywhere; every day was the same, and she didn't need to remember what she had to do. Now, she needed to write her shifts down and she had a flourishing social life that she needed to keep track of. For the first time in her life she was busy. The things we take for granted!

I started managing a few of the other services we had and came into contact with a lot more people because of it. At one point I had been invited to go down to London to a conference about learning disabilities and new ways of working. Instead of taking my colleagues, I decided to take two people that used our services.

We set off to London and went to this conference. For them it was just a fun day out on the train. Anyway the conference finished early. We could have just returned home, but I remember checking the time and thinking that we didn't need to be back just yet. So the four of us went on the London Eye! I just thought, what the heck… I'll pay for it myself!

They loved it and we had a great time. It's those little memories that make working for PSS an absolute joy.

Gosh, it doesn't just change the lives of the people that use the services… it changed all of ours too.'

Sue's
Shared Lives

- 1978 -

1978 was a year of ground-breaking firsts: the first test tube baby in the UK, the first time we boogied on down to 'Stayin' Alive' by the BeeGees and the first time we invaded space (at the arcade, of course). Never one to shy away from the action, PSS was also cementing a first in the social care world; a pioneering model of support which works so well that it's still very much thriving 40 years on. Thanks to the unstoppable Sue Newton, our Shared Lives service was born in 1978. Shared Lives is a form of social care for adults, where someone who needs support – whatever their needs might be – is carefully matched with one of our Shared Lives carers and either goes to live with them in their family home in the long or short-term, or is supported by them during the day. Their Shared Lives carer's job is to support them to live their lives to the fullest, whatever that means for them, and the people we support are given as much or as little support as they want or need. Shared Lives was such a unique idea in the UK that it changed the face of social care and has been impacting lives ever since. Here's Sue's story...

'I went to university, got a science degree, worked for a bit and then started a family; back then you stayed at home to look after the children. When my youngest turned six, I'd done some volunteering work for a charity. I thought this was a wonderful experience and decided that, if I was going to do social work, I'd better get a degree. I wanted to get some experience in social work to see if it was right for me, so I interviewed for a placement with PSS, and started in 1978.

Then, if you were looking after a parent or an aging relative and wanted to have a break, you would ring up social services and see if there was a bed, usually in an older people's home, to spare. This would only be spare because someone had been taken to hospital – that was it. There was virtually nothing else.

This is where Shared Lives began – to plug that gap and give people a chance to receive support without being taken into institutional care. Initially we asked for volunteers to take someone in and care for them. If you think about it very fundamentally, it's human nature to care. I'm sure during the prehistoric times, people would be sitting in their caves and taking care of people.

I had to find out if there was a need, what sort of need it was, and then see what I could do.

I had to find out if there was a need, what sort of need it was, and then see what I could do. I didn't know what the carers would be like and what they could cope with; I knew they would need to be kind, though.

There was a bit of opposition - we had to work with GPs to get people referred but it was quite hard at the start. Some people didn't see how someone could take someone else in.

I had to go and interview the person who wanted to go (into the placement). I'd meet their family and we'd have a placement visit. I'd then take them to the carer and be 'on call' to make sure everyone was happy. Sometimes it was difficult for people to adjust. The carers would support just about anyone and really work with them. Any shape, size, attitude or anything.

They would just welcome them and they would be loved and wanted.

At the start, I had to drive all over Liverpool. No two days were the same. Robin Currie, a previous PSS chief executive, was very supportive. If I suggested we needed something, he would really listen and trust my judgement. If I asked: 'Why don't we…' the answer would usually be 'Yes, we can.' We changed from short-term care to long-term, which was quite a jump. We could have seen it as too much of a jump but Robin was very open to things moving forward. I remember one night I got a phone call. There was a daughter who had a

learning disability and her mum had taken ill. It seemed inappropriate to put her in an old people's home, so we placed her with a carer. It was wonderful and she immediately felt at home. I then asked if we could do something for people with learning disabilities. So we did! That seems to be the philosophy at PSS. Always finding a way to make things happen.

In the 1970s the shut-down of long-term institutions like Rainhill made a big difference. This was a major thing and people were worried. I remember people saying, 'You'll rue the day that you started taking people out of these places.'

I went to assess people who I thought might be a good fit for Shared Lives. I remember a carer in Woolton took a lady from Rainhill who was hearing voices. She had been there for 50-60 years just because she'd set fire to some curtains. You could end up somewhere like that and never get out. You can see why people wanted to close those places.

They couldn't even open windows there. It was summed up well by a woman who lived in a long-stay hospital. It was her first Christmas outside of hospital and she was asked if she was looking forward to the festivities. She replied saying, 'Every day is like Christmas here.' I well up and cry about all these things - it was so wonderful! It was a dream for them and they just became part

The carers would support just about anyone and really work with them. Any shape, size, attitude or anything. They would just welcome them and they would be loved and wanted.

of the family. It's the normality of life which is important. You can open your front door, you can take your milk bottle off the front step… you're part of the community. It's quite a gift to give someone.

In the beginning we didn't know what to call it. I think it went by 'Boarding Out' at first. It was the same principle as fostering children but we didn't want it to get mixed up with that. Then we decided on 'Adult Placement', but other people would call it 'Rent A Granny!' I think I suggested 'Shared Lives' because it really summed up exactly what it was. It's like a tree; you plant the seed, and it grows some shoots and off it goes. As long as something has the right ethos, it will last. Shared Lives has this. People using the service are now a lot more involved in the service, which is good. The world is our oyster.'

Nancy's *sanctuary*

- 1990s and beyond -

Sometimes in life you meet people who are just unforgettable. Shiny gems of human beings who stick out in your mind for many years to come. Shared Lives carer Nancy, who lives in Liverpool, is one of those people. She's been a Shared Lives carer for 29 years and, in that time, has provided the highest quality support to people who have needed her all over the region. But not only does this ex-nurse provide professional support, she also provides people with something much more than that: family. Just like all of our amazing Shared Lives carers, she has opened up her home and welcomed people in just like one of her own...

'I started my working life as a nurse in the Royal Hospital in Liverpool working on an elderly care ward. I always felt this bond with the elderly and I could never quite put my finger on why – I just loved working with them. God, I worked some long hours on that ward, though, it was exhausting. I was desperate to make as much money for the family as I could, though, they were all so young then. I worked 72 hours week on my feet. It was taking its toll. I was about seven stone something then, a slip of a thing. The doctors were worried about my health. I knew that I need something else that would give me that quality time with the family back. Coming home to three young children after the stresses of a day in hospital was just too much.

One day, as I was getting on the bus for my commute home from work, another nurse sat beside her and asked, 'Have you heard of PSS?' Well I must have been

dazed and confused at the time, it had been a long shift. I asked her if it was a shop. Well that made her laugh. She told me what Shared Lives was all about. It wasn't called Shared Lives then, though. She said it was something for people with spare rooms or a big house (which I didn't have at the time), who could take elderly residents in their home and be paid for their hospitality. I'll admit it, my initial reaction was, 'Is it tiredness or is she crazy?'

I just couldn't imagine that people were doing this. It was so new back then. People were still in institutions. It was a different time. Anyway, that night, I went home and sorted the kids out and went off to bed, forgetting all about it. Then the following week, I saw the very same nurse on the bus and, without really understanding why, I just felt it was right to ask for the number. When I went home that night, I told my husband Frank. Well, he near spat out his dinner! Having people living in your home? That seemed a little drastic to him - he's a lot less forthright than me you see, always has been.

I just couldn't imagine that people were doing this. It was so new back then. People were still in institutions. It was a different time.

About six months went by and I couldn't get it out of my mind, I don't know why but I love the elderly. I thought imagine doing something like that for them. Anyway, I rang up and here I am, 29 years later. I dwelled on it for six months and I remember ringing and saying – 'I don't really understand or if I'm speaking to the right person'. It was Sally, a social worker who worked here then. So she said would come out and see me and I panicked because the house was a bit of a mess plus I was still questioning what I was actually doing. Someone being in your own home, it's a total different type of responsibility. So, Sally came out, she was lovely, explained it all well. She said, 'Well you know, think about it, you've got three young children.' They were eight, ten and thirteen at the time. She told me to have a good think and then ring back if I was still convinced. When I told Frank about things, he said 'Oh, I couldn't do that'. But something told me I could, I knew I could. Anyway, I thought that's it, I'm going

to ring her back. Lo and behold it was Sally again who picked up the phone and she remembered me. She started the process of getting references for me and Frank – all of which came back glowing: good time-keeping, hardworking, trustworthy. She asked about the children, our family history and then asked if I wanted to start the ball rolling. I knew Frank was unsure but I felt I had to do it. I said yes.

A few months later Fran, my social worker at the time, called to tell me about a lady who she thought might be a good fit.

Ann was about to be discharged from Walton Hospital after experiencing severe post-traumatic stress. She needed someone to support her through this dark time. Ann had just one son, aged 34, who she had spoilt growing up. She'd tell you this herself, she completely doted on him. She said that people would comment on how she'd ruined him, how she'd led him astray. He was struggling, isolating himself from the people who loved him. One day, Ann came home from work and he had taken his own life, no note. This shook her to the core, it tore her world apart. She was simply crushed by cold shock and despair. I can't imagine what this sight did to her. The shock is what put her in hospital, where she had to try and come to terms with what had happened. That was so hard. Ann needed support and I did the best I could. She was assured that she could speak to me about things whenever she felt ready. I'd like to think I made her feel comfortable and she did the simple things in life for her that she'd lost all will to even think about. I cooked for her, cleaned her clothes, the basics. In some time Ann seemed more at ease, it was as if her life started again. I was so happy for Ann but it was so mentally draining for me. It was hard to keep positive. I didn't let this show but I wasn't sure of how much I could support her, I doubted myself. I was still young then and I thought having someone else around her might help Ann. So I asked about the possibility of having someone else come to live in my home.

Fran suggested another elderly lady to move in, she was called Lil. Lil had a form of dementia. She'd never had children when she was younger, she wasn't able to and she'd stuck to her husband like glue. One sad day, Lil found her husband in bed, he had passed away in his sleep. She couldn't think about a life without him. At this point, Lil gave up. She couldn't eat, she couldn't sleep, she couldn't even wash; she lost all motivation to do anything. Having Ann

and Lil living together really worked well, they could relate to each other and share what they'd been through. This made me feel more at ease, I liked seeing him interact and could see them helping each other. I was glad to make this companionship happen.

Well, I found adjusting to this new career rewarding but not short of its challenges. It was more than just a career, it completely reshaped my life and her views on the world but I was determined to treat the people who lived with me like kings and queens. So, the next thing was I was the first person to be asked to take on three. I suppose that I'd shown myself to be capable and trustworthy. Pam Doyle (our current head of homes and communities, who was a student social worker back then) asked me the question of whether I thought I could take on an additional person. Apparently she thought, of anyone, that I was the one who could do it. It just so happened that Frank had gone part time on the ambulances recently so I felt more confident, I had his support and we could do it together. I loved having three people living with me and bouncing off each other when Cath moved in, but my feet barely touched the ground.

Cath had also been through a lot. When she moved in with us, she was 82 years old and she'd dealt with years and years of abuse from her husband. Cath simply couldn't cope and escaped him, leaving behind her children too. She was a shell of a person and she felt that this was the only way she could move forward in her life. Cath said she loved living with me, she felt that she'd really landed on her feet after a lifetime of torment. She would tell me the tales of what she had been through. She'd endured verbal, sexual, financial and physical abuse, absolutely harrowing stuff, I can't even talk about it to this day. Hearing about this really shook me to the core and I was just thinking how good it was to give her some peace at her age. She spent her final years living with us, as did many of the people who we've supported through the years. Although this was so tough, I've always got a lot from the thought that I've been able to give these people some comfort at the end of their life, some happy memories and some sanctuary from their heartache. But there is one special person whose death really overwhelmed me, who I will never completely come to terms with of the eleven people who've shared our home with us in the past 29 years...

Tina was a daughter to me. She lived with the family for fifteen years and, within that time, everyone had such a bond with her. Tina moved in with us when she was 52, but I always felt maternal towards her because of the way she doted on me. She would always say 'mum' from the first day that she moved in with me. Tina was adopted by Mrs Clark when she was six weeks old and Mrs Clark could see straight away that there were some developmental issues. Tina's head would always tilt forward and her expressions were different from other babies that she had seen before. So, she took her to see a private doctor, she wanted the best treatment for her daughter. The doctor diagnosed Tina with Asperger Syndrome, a condition that wasn't really understood at the time. Back then, of course, people who adopted would be given the option to give that child back if they had a disability, it was a different era, but Mrs Clark was determined to raise Tina and give her the very best life possible. And that she did. Mrs Clark admitted that Tina had been spoilt by her, she was the most loved child and she just had such an infectious way about her that was simply impossible to not succumb to. She was just a beautiful person. One day, Tina's mum was found in the bath after having a stroke. She was 92. Somebody needed to support Tina. It was more of a nursing case, really. Tina had had everything done for her, her entire life, and she was still so childlike. So, Bob Bell (who now manages our Shared Lives Merseyside service) was on a mission to find someone who would be up to this challenge. I came into his head!

Tina moved in with me and depended on me like I was her mum. She didn't speak much but would always tell me how much she loved me. She always wanted cuddles and affection. Well, I was completely taken aback by this, I felt so protective to her. When Mrs Clark found out that Tina couldn't stay with her and that she would have to move into a nursing home, she broke down. She wouldn't allow it. She was hysterical. So, I said to leave it with me, and I went to speak to her. The nursing home was just around the corner, so I went to see her. I explained that I would take the best of care of her daughter, that she was happy and that she would still be in contact. I didn't want her to fret at all, especially after all that she had been through. And so I stuck to my promise. I arranged for somebody to take Tina to visit her mum every single week between 1-4pm and went to visit Mrs Clark myself separately every week for a couple of hours, updating her on how Tina was getting on. Tina was her world and knowing that she was safe was the best final wish she could have.

This is a hard job. You go to bed with them there, you wake up to them, you go to bed with them on your mind and you have to take the good with the bad – like family. Believe you me, it's not easy. But my God, it's worth it.

Tina was such a sensitive soul. Everywhere she went she would carry a doll around with her, taking care of it like her own. They were inseparable. And she was well-known by the staff at PSS for her warm nature, too. She got so excited when she got the opportunity to meet Prince Edward when he visited PSS. I've got volumes and volumes of photos of Tina and the whole family on various days out. They made lots of memories together. And she loved my children and grandchildren, too, particularly Cerys, who now works at PSS's Making Days North, a day centre for adults with learning disabilities. I think this career choice was down to her upbringing. She knows everyone's equal.

In the 15 years that Tina lived with my family she built such close ties with everyone, she saw new children being born, she was a part of many family celebrations and she genuinely became one of them. That's what made it so hard to say goodbye three years ago. I remember stepping into her room and straight away knowing that something wasn't right. Tina was very ill and when we got the diagnosis of pneumonia I broke down. Shortly afterwards Tina passed away. I'll never get over her, I still can't bring myself to have another person living in her room. That was Tina's room and this is the way it will stay. The house feels empty without her presence.

In Tina's coffin I requested that her doll be placed into her hands. This was her pride and joy and she wouldn't have had it any other way. I asked her family if her ashes could stay with us too so now they live at the end of the garden in a little pink pot. She had lots of happy memories here.

This is a hard job. You go to bed with them there, you wake up to them, you go to bed with them on your mind and you have to take the good with the bad – like family. Believe you me, it's not easy. But my God, it's worth it.'


Eleanor
Rathbone

LIVERPOOL PERSONAL SERVICE SOCIETY

WE CAN WORK IT OUT

DO YOU HAVE A PROBLEM THAT YOU WOULD FIND IT HELPFUL TO TALK TO SOMEONE ABOUT?

SOMETIMES RELATIVES AND CLOSE FRIENDS ARE NOT EASY TO TALK TO OR ARE TOO INVOLVED THEMSELVES

THEN PERHAPS WE CAN HELP?

ANYTHING WHICH YOU DISCUSS WILL BE CONFIDENTIAL AND WILL BE ACCEPTED BY AN UNDERSTANDING AND CARING LISTENER BETWEEN US WE CAN WORK IT OUT

We are available 9.30-3.30 Mon-Fri at Liverpool Personal Service Society First Floor, 34 Stanley Street or Ring for an appointment: 236 5255

A PERSONAL SUPPORT, HELP & COUNSELLING SERVICE IN THE CENTRE OF LIVERPOOL

Turnaround

- 2002 and beyond -

With our Women's Turnaround service, we support women in Merseyside who have previously committed offences, giving them all the advice and practical support they need to get their lives back on track, and make better choices in the future. There are so many reasons why people might commit a crime – and everyone should have the chance to change their lives for the better. This is Susan's story.

'I had a partner for 13 years. I looked after his two kids and everything. There was a lot of emotional manipulation over the years and it started to get really bad.

One day he left me, with absolutely no explanation. Just like that. He was gone. He pretended like he'd never met me and would go to the police and tell them I was stalking him.

He'd delete all his text messages to me, so it looked like it was just me sending them to him.

I remember when I worked at Alder Hey hospital, he happened to be there. He told the police that I'd followed him and was making him uncomfortable in his own city. It was all just lies.

Basically, he was leaving a trail for the police... trying to rile me up! He knew I'd respond. It ended with him getting a restraining order against me. That's how I've ended up here at PSS, because of this false picture he painted of me.

I'd been like a mum to those kids and I'd always be there for them if they ever reached out to me.

I think I'm a really good example of how different everyone's cases can be. There is no algorithm for how you might find this service, it can happen to anyone.

I think I'm a really good example of how different everyone's cases can be. There is no algorithm for how you might find this service, it can happen to anyone.

It's been life changing coming here. I've met some great people and I'd even call them friends. It's hard to not get down and it really weighs heavy on my heart.

I came to one of the sessions and we were writing down our heroes... one of the girls I was with turned and said to me: 'I want to be just like you, you're my hero.' I can't tell how you how much that lifted me up. I was as light as air walking out of the building. It's those moments that make it worth it.'

Incredible *Cheryl*

- 2017 -

Cheryl is a working mum who, by a stroke of luck, came into contact with a service at PSS called Independent Support. Sarah, a member of the PSS team, has described her as 'absolutely incredible' and is in constant disbelief at how she manages to balance all of the different parts of her life. Not only is she continuing to fight for an appropriately tailored education for her son, who deals with hidden learning disabilities, but she's also the primary carer for her husband and has two other children to look after. This is her PSS story.

'I've got to be honest. I had no clue about PSS. That's terrible, isn't it? It all happened completely by accident when I went to a coffee morning with Knowsley Parent Carers voice in September 2017. I just needed more information.

My son Declan has additional needs and is in mainstream school. All I've ever been told is that he's a 'normal, average child'. I'm his mum - I've always known he has a hidden disability but no one would ever listen to me. He's had assessments that clearly show he has trouble with sensory processing and a language development delay. They just confirmed what I already knew. However, the school still ignored the evidence. They just didn't seem to care.

Thankfully when I went to this coffee morning it was like a different world. I know how to do most things and I'm good at reaching out and finding information about services but I just needed that little bit of extra help. That's where I met Sarah from PSS. She was absolutely amazing. I remember her explaining everything to me about the support Declan should be getting. I

just thought there's no way the school would give him that kind of help, but she never took no for an answer. Every time I was having doubts she sat with me and explained that if a child has special educational needs, it's the school's duty to help. I wanted to believe her but I still thought it would never happen. However, every time I went to these coffee mornings I started to have more faith in what Sarah was telling me. She was right; he was entitled to all of it. I felt so angry that Declan had just been left dangling for all these years. Just floating around.

I learnt loads from PSS and always felt so supported. I'm even on the Parent Carers Voice committee at school now! I love it and I've learnt so much. Sarah was there every step of the way helping me to fill out all of my forms. As time went on I gained so much knowledge and I couldn't have done it without her. Thank God for that coffee morning! They've changed my whole life. It's alright knowing all the information but if you don't know what to do with it, it's useless.

She built me up every step of the way and told me that I'd done it all myself.

Sarah still never took any of the credit. She built me up every step of the way and told me that I'd done it all myself. As a mum I felt so helpless. Declan's pain was my pain and to know that I'd done this for my son was all I could've ever asked for.

The plan he now has in place is all thanks to PSS. I just want it to keep going. I'll never be able to thank Sarah enough. PSS really go on the journey with you. For someone to be that selfless and get in touch with me even on her days off - I just couldn't believe it! She was like family and I'll always be so grateful for the future that she's given my son.'


PERSONAL SERVICE
SOCIETY
AND
CITIZENS ADVICE
BUREAU
BUILDINGS

Nothing's ever *really lost*

- 1964 -

In the early 1960s, Lindy Higgins had reached breaking point. As a child she'd lost both her parents in a tragic accident and had been sent to live with her uncle. She'd always felt unsteady and desperately wanted normality. Unable to cope and feeling suffocated by those around her, Lindy wanted freedom. Once again the superheroes of the Citizen Advice Bureau, which PSS ran from its first offices on Liverpool's Stanley Street, were there to lend a helping hand...

A couple of years earlier in 1964, Lindy had decided enough was enough. Her mental health had been difficult for her to manage and she needed to be somewhere she wasn't reminded of the past – of her parents. Lindy knew she had to leave her uncle's house. Every time she looked at him she was reminded of what she'd lost. He couldn't understand how she was feeling and was horrified that she wanted to leave; he'd promised her mum that he'd take care of her if anything ever happened. He only wanted to keep her safe and away from any more harm.

Eventually, he couldn't reason with her anymore, her decision was made. Pleading with her until she reached the door - he pushed the house keys into her hands and said, 'Whenever you're ready, you'll always have a home with me'.

Lindy went to Liverpool looking for adventure and solace, hoping not to be defined by the loss of her parents. She started to look for a job, and managed to secure one at a women's hostel in the centre of Liverpool. Whilst working there

she met a boy, Dereck, and fell in love instantaneously. He gave her security and promised to look after her.

Lindy was so happy about her new-found freedom and thought that life was finally starting to feel like hers. A few weeks later, at 19 years of age, she fell pregnant. She was elated as she realised that this would be the family she'd never had and vowed to be around for her child, the way her mum never got to. However, black clouds were just out of sight. Just before the birth of her daughter, Dereck left Liverpool and never returned. Lindy was heartbroken and wondered how she could survive as a single mum. She didn't have any money. She had no one to guide her. She felt abandoned, alone and more lost than ever.

Lorraine was born in December 1965 in one of the local hospitals. As Lindy looked down at her tiny face, she saw her own mum looking back at her.

When Lindy left hospital, she struggled to find anywhere suitable for her and her new baby to live. Becoming more and more desperate as the days passed by, she was eventually forced to go to Corporation Temporary Accommodation for the Homeless, which was one of the few options for people at risk of homelessness at the time. Sitting in the corner of a dingy room, waiting to be seen, she began to cry.

'Whenever you're ready, you'll always have a home with me'.

A woman tapped her on the shoulder and offered her a tissue. She looked kind yet inquisitive, and Lindy immediately felt like she could trust her. After several hours of talking, the woman, called Verity, told her that she worked for an organisation called PSS; a place that helped anyone who was in need and would try to do something for her. Lindy's eyes widened at the thought of a helping hand and impartial ear. She'd been through so much and had felt so alone, but right then and there, she could see a light at the end of the tunnel.

Verity knew she had to help Lindy get back on her feet again, so started making plans. She listened to Lindy closely, without judgement, and recognising her loneliness, made it clear to Lindy that she was always there to provide advice and support. Lorraine hadn't been given a health check since she was born, so

She was elated as she realised that this would be the family she'd never had and vowed to be around for her child, the way her mum never got to.

Verity's first step was to have her admitted into hospital for a full check-up. She also visited some community centres to help find Lindy a suitable room and place to stay.

With the help of Verity and the people at PSS, Lindy had the courage to write to her uncle and apologise for the way she had behaved. In time, he accepted her apology, and she felt relieved and happy to be back in touch with him. Eventually, she gathered the courage to introduce him to her daughter. His reaction could never have been anticipated. He stood stunned in the doorway, blinking away tears as he reached out to embrace his niece. 'She's just like her', he said. 'It's like a little piece of her lives on.'


FLOUR
36p
HEINZ BEANS
15p
SWEET SHOP
24 BEEF BURGERS
ARIEL
SHOP LOCAL
GARDEN PEAS
17p
SHOP LOCAL
COFFEE
100g
69p

Strengthening families *since the thirties*

- 1930s and beyond -

In the early thirties, unemployment reached 31.5% and the death rate in Liverpool was at its highest. The public assistance committees that existed at the time to donate money to those in need were very unsympathetic, and PSS people could never understand why there was such a divide between what was classed as the 'deserving' and 'undeserving'. This injustice propelled our general secretary, Dorothy Keeling, to lodge complaints to try and get every family in Liverpool above the poverty line. To PSS, someone's family background didn't define who they were; anyone who walked into Stanley Street was supported. Even back in the 30s, need was need. It was (and still is) as simple as that around here, as this collection of stories show.

Sewing seeds of change

Back in the 1930s, a sex worker had applied for a grant for a sewing machine to help turn her life around. This was initially refused, perhaps because of the intolerance of people like her the time. When PSS heard about this, we thought getting this woman a sewing machine was a great idea. It would empower her to make positive change and give her the start she needed. Back then, PSS relied a lot on compassionate people in society to be able to financially support our goals – and it was thanks to one of these donors that we were able to make this woman's dream come true. We got her a sewing machine and taught her how to use it, so she could support herself. For PSS, there was no such thing as the societal stigmas which stifled generosity and warmth towards others elsewhere - our doors were always open for anyone that needed help.

Always in your corner

The people of Liverpool were always looking out for each other – especially as help from the state was increasingly sparse. In the true spirit of the city, they felt that they had to band together and make the best out of the dire situation they were in. Following the First World War, in the depths of an influenza epidemic, the parents of two small girls died. Despite there being no legal adoption schemes in place at the time, PSS wanted to help – forever plugging the gaps in public services. PSS set about getting these girls the love and care they so deserved, and found two big-hearted fellow Liverpudlians that were willing to take them into their home, raising them as their own and giving them the best chance at life.

This was not an isolated case by any means, and many orphaned children were provided with a home and a family by PSS and many kind scousers.

Our very own Dorothy Keeling became a guardian of four young girls.

Even our very own Dorothy Keeling became a guardian of four young girls. Their dad was killed during the war, with their mum's death following shortly after. This was before any benefits to support their situation existed, meaning that there were limited opportunities to find a way to make things better. However, Dorothy's spirit and tenacity could never be dampened and she went about selling the girls' old family shop so she had the money to provide a good life for them. That's not to mention the emotional support she gave them during a time of such crisis so early in their lives.

A bridge over troubled water

In 1936, lots of marriages struggled, despite the fact that this was often masked and there was lots of stigma surrounding marriage breakdown. People married and had children at a younger age in those days, which often led to resentment when money was, more often than not, particularly tight. With the war came periods of time when husbands were often away from their families for a very long amount of time, causing yet more strain on relationships. PSS recognised these issues – acknowledging that they should be dealt with, rather than

brushed under the carpet. We provided a marriage counselling service, which was massively forward-thinking in this era. Off the back of this service came many stories of relationships transformed.

This small window of time meant that they could get their relationship back on track and look to the future with some hope of things to look forward to, rather than one filled with dread and uncertainty.

One man serving a sentence in Walton prison had never been allowed to see his wife alone, creating an emptiness between them that he felt was irreparable. PSS petitioned for them to get some time on their own, allowing him to talk about his problems and open up to his wife once more. This small window of time meant that they could get their relationship back on track and look to the future with some hope of things to look forward to, rather than one filled with dread and uncertainty. This has some striking parallels with the work we do today at our Family Visitors' Centre in HMP Altcourse, Liverpool, where we support families through prison visits, give children the chance to bond with their imprisoned family member through a number of means and help families cope with what they're going through.

A newly-separated couple were struggling with not being together. They both wondered whether they had made the right decision, so they came to talk to PSS individually for some advice, without the knowledge of the other one being there. A member of PSS staff suggested that they attend a counselling session together with their daughter, who'd not seen her dad in some time. During the session, the PSS member of staff made a simple suggestion that the child should embrace her dad, who he'd really been missing. The child put her arms around his neck and asked him to come home. All of a sudden, the couple looked at each other and everything seemed clearer. They'd lost sight of what was important and decided to work together on rebuilding their family.

SWISS ROAD NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE

SUMMER PLAYSCHEME

LIVERPOOL PERSONAL SERVICE SOCIETY

Aid for victims of crime

Advice Required?

Emotional Problems?

Housing Problems?

Financial Problems?

Someone to talk to?

Assistance with compensation?

LIVERPOOL PERSONAL SERVICE SOCIETY

Alive again

- 2019 -

Most of us will experience a mental health challenge at some point in our lives. Our Wellbeing Centres in Liverpool provide a safe, friendly and non-judgemental space for people to get support with what they're going through. We give people a place in their community where they can go to just be themselves, however they're feeling: to talk about what's in their head, meet others who might have felt a similar way and to learn ways to help them feel better. These centres offer a light in the darkness for so many - like Corinne, who has been coming to our Wellbeing Centres for six years. Corinne's become a popular part of the peer support team at the Wellbeing Centres in that time. In fact, she's really chuffed to have been voted PSS's Supporter of The Year 2019. But things didn't always feel like they do now for Corinne. Her story is one of hope, and learning to live again.

'I never used to talk about this. But I've got to the point now where I just feel like I want to get it out there.

I originally come from London. Both my parents had really severe mental health problems. My dad was schizophrenic and my mum had severe paranoia. My brother, sister and I didn't have an ordinary upbringing. It wasn't an ordinary life…I had a bit of a weird childhood, really.

My dad was in and out of a mental health hospital in London. He had electric shock treatment, which is the way they treated things in those days. I remember I had to go and see him at some point. Mum took us. She said that if we said anything about our mental health, that could happen to us.

In those days there used to be a huge amount of stigma around mental health. We were always outcast. In those days, people thought mental health problems were catching, and that we'd caught it off our parents as children. We never really fitted in anywhere down there.

When I was 17, my mum asked me to leave. My sister had already gone. She just didn't want us there. So I left home. I lived around London for a bit, in different friends' houses. That was one good thing – I wasn't on the streets. And I could've been.

I then became an au pair, and went over to France to work there for a year. And then my sister, who'd been in Australia, ended up in Liverpool and said 'Come on, come and stay with me.' I hadn't seen her in years, so it was really nice to be able to come up and see her.

When I got to Liverpool I kept myself to myself. I'd never really trusted people or mixed with people, in case they judged me. I can't go back and do anything again, but thinking back I probably was… yeah. I went through various therapies, went to psychiatrists and everything else. I met my husband in Liverpool, and eventually I had two children.

People kept asking me to be a peer mentor and it made me feel really wanted. At first I thought, 'can I really do that?'

Then about six years ago, I reached my lowest ebb. I got made redundant from work. I thought, I'm over 60, who's going to want to employ me? It all built up. My husband seemed to argue with me a lot, and he also suffers with his mental health. The kids were growing up – nobody needed me that much. I felt useless, and I lost my will. I thought they were all better off without me, causing them problems. I was way under six stone; I couldn't eat – I didn't want to. Didn't want to do anything. My daughter cried when she saw me. 'Mum, mum', she said, 'I just want you to do something about this.' I just thought that's it – my life is over. I've had enough.

Then I went to this lovely young doctor who took a look at me and said, 'You need more help than this.' She sent me to hospital, to something called 'Inclusion Matters' I think, which was the thing they had then. They referred me to PSS.

The first day I came to the PSS Umbrella Centre, I couldn't find the building and by the time I did, I was in full panic mode. I burst through the door, all flustered. And there was Paddy. He took me downstairs to a calm room, made me a cup of tea and just sat with me. He let me spill it all out.

Paddy encouraged me to join some of the Wellbeing Centres' groups. I did, and at first, I didn't want to speak to anyone. I thought my god, what do I do here. But gradually, bit by bit, I got to feel that actually, everyone there in the group was like me. To each other, we were all sort of 'normal' – maybe not to everyone else out there in the big wide world, but to us, yes. We were normal. We could chat about things and understand each other. I started to join more and more groups: art, and acting, which was brilliant because it helped me get myself out there. It was wonderful. Life just kept getting better.

People kept asking me to be a peer mentor and it made me feel really wanted. At first I thought, 'can I really do that?' Then one day a guy called Marc asked me

to come along to a group he ran called Culture Vultures, where people get out and do things together. They were going out one evening that week. I thought 'Ooo, going out for a night out? Haven't done that for ages, I'd love to', and I went. We went to the Liverpool Philharmonic to see Psycho, of all things, with the Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra playing the music in the background. Everyone was lovely – we were all talking together - and I absolutely loved it. I kept on going.

Loneliness has to be one of the biggest causes of mental health problems – and anyone can have mental health problems. My husband isn't very well and sits at home (not his fault, of course), so for me – it was amazing. I was getting out. In fact, seeing me going out and about also helped my son, who also has problems. It encouraged him to do the same.

Eventually Marc started doing other things and one day he asked me if I'd feel like taking Culture Vultures over from him and running it. Organising trips and things used to be part of my job at work, so I said yes. I went on the peer mentoring course, and I took it over. Since then, I've been to various trips out with people, and now I've got used to it, I love it. I don't have much money and I didn't come from a great background, but I've never stopped learning – I've been to my first Shakespeare play, I've learned about all different cultures here, I've been to art galleries, I've been to the theatre. I've opened my mind, and it keeps pushing me on. I want to do more and more. I just want to give back now. I want to do all I can to help – to help both PSS and to help other people. If I can get one person coming here, feeling happier… that would mean the world.

The staff at the Wellbeing Centres are absolutely fantastic. If it hadn't been for them, I wouldn't be here. And I wouldn't be telling my story like this. PSS saved my life. I've been through every therapy you can think of, but the ones I've had at PSS… they're the ones that have done me good. They've encouraged me to live, to feel confident, to do things… I mean, I'm playing the ukulele, I'm singing, I'm acting, I'm part of HOP (the Happy Older People network)… it's just marvellous, it really is. It's opened up my life. I'm just living, now. I really am.

I'm alive.'


ARBOUR


RING DAY
MOTHERS
THANK OFFERING DAY
HELP THE MOTHERS


LIVERPOOL CHILD WELFARE
CHILD WELFARE CENTRE
FOR THE CARE OF
CRIPPLED & DELICATE
CHILDREN & INFANTS
ASSOCIATION
LIVERPOOL OPEN AIR HOSPITAL
FOR CHILDREN LEAGUE
THE LIVERPOOL BABIES HOSPITAL
HOLIDAY CAMPS

The right thing
in the right way

- 1970 -

In 1938, with the war imminent, preparation started across the country to establish a network of emergency services. The first Citizens Advice Bureau opened on September 4th 1939 – and PSS was involved in rolling out the government scheme in Merseyside, setting up the first official Citizens Advice Bureau in the region. However, what many people don't know is that the idea had already been planted at PSS many years before by general secretary Dorothy Keeling. Before the first official Citizens Advice Bureau had opened its doors, PSS provided a walk-in advice service, offering immediate help to people in crisis situations and those experiencing difficulty. A snapshot of one day saw PSS helping people with problems including: rent, homelessness, child support, unemployment and pension payments, support for relatives with disabilities and mental health needs, accidents at work, urgent need for food, clothing or footwear needs, costs of health care and advice on birth control and abortions. In 1970, Valery approached PSS after she found out she was five weeks pregnant. At seventeen years old, she felt that she couldn't talk to her family and desperately needed someone to lend a friendly ear and show her that she wasn't alone. Thankfully, PSS was waiting in the wings...

Valery walked into the PSS offices at Stanley Street wearing a long purple coat, trimmed with white fur and matching thigh-high boots. She looked so confident and full of life but the mask was soon to slip. She'd been trying to be strong, not wanting anyone close to her to know that beneath the surface she was falling apart. That happy-go-lucky demeanour was just a façade.

A few weeks before, she found out that she was pregnant and was now over a month along. Valery wasn't able to talk to her own doctor because he was a close family friend and she couldn't bear the thought of her parents finding out. Although the Abortion Act of 1967 was now in place, legalising abortion under 24 weeks in the UK, her family were still opposed to it - and she knew that they would be horrified at her decision, should she choose to end her pregnancy. Whatever she did, she would feel torn and ashamed.

She'd been trying to be strong, not wanting anyone close to her to know that beneath the surface she was falling apart.

Valery needed someone to talk to. Someone to cry with. Someone who wouldn't judge her. She was matched with a woman from PSS named Andrea, who would support her every step of the way. When she met Andrea for the first time, Valery immediately felt able to open up. She revealed that the baby's dad was already married, with a family of his own, and that he'd cut off all contact since she told him the news. Feeling her pain, Andrea told her that she'd done all she could to try and keep him involved. Valery knew that was true and felt that she couldn't do anything else. The last thing she wanted to do was break up a family. He'd recently had a lot of financial trouble and, despite how heartbroken she was, she loved him and didn't want to add to the burden. However, it didn't stop the pain.

The two women sat down and went through all of the possible alternatives to having an abortion, but by then, Valery was adamant that this was what she wanted to do. Going through this experience had made her realise how young she was, how big the world was and how much time was still ahead for many adventures to unfold. Deep in her heart she knew that she'd have a family of her own one day, but this wasn't her time.

Valery was advised to try and find another GP and was given a few contacts to get in touch with. A couple of days later, she called the office and told Andrea she'd found someone she could turn to and that she'd got an appointment in Birmingham early next month. Valery was really scared about having an

abortion but found it helpful and comforting to be able to lean on Andrea throughout the experience. Despite her mixed feelings, she knew it was the right thing to do. She didn't want to lie to her parents but Valery needed to make this decision herself. There were times when she was really starting to feel the pressure of not being able to tell her family and have them with her. However, every time she talked Andrea she felt her burden lighten, like someone was reaching through the phone and giving her a big hug.

Valery came to her last appointment at PSS and had another talk about how she was feeling. She said that it had been comforting to see a lot of girls her age there at the clinic, going through a similar experience. She wasn't alone. Valery looked much brighter and didn't feel so isolated anymore. Before leaving, she explained how she wanted to experience some of the world before settling down and make the most out of her life. With Andrea's support she was now facing forward towards her future knowing that if she ever needed to pause, Andrea and PSS would be waiting to be there for her, if she ever felt alone again.

Going through this experience had made her realise how young she was, how big the world was and how much time was still ahead for many adventures to unfold.

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Neighbourhood Work

Visiting

Supporting Groups

Youth Work

ENJOY A NEW INTEREST – SOMETHING WORTHWHILE

Founded by Eleanor Rathbone and Dorothy Keeling back in 1919, social enterprise PSS was set up to support the most vulnerable people in Liverpool, beginning its life with the title 'Liverpool Personal Services Society'.

Our motto was 'A society for any citizen in difficulty' – and that is exactly what we were, and what we are today. Finding new ways to support the most vulnerable in society, we were there at the start of some of the biggest names in social care, laying the foundations for the likes of Age UK, The Citizens Advice Bureau, Relate and Riverside Housing. For the last 100 years, we've been growing and adapting, providing services that change people's lives for the better, now not just in Liverpool, but up and down the UK and in the Isle of Man.

What Ought To Be Done is a collection of heart-warming stories that span right across our incredible history, told by the people we support, our staff past and present, or taken from our archives. They talk not only of the fascinating personal journeys of some of the amazing people we've met over the years, but also how, with the right support, even during some of our hardest times we can experience some of the best things in life: kindness, compassion, strength, fairness, love, friendship and hope.

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